Vol. VII. No. 1 JANUARY, 1958

TAMIL CULTURE

JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF TAMIL CULTURE

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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. Dr. Xavier S. Thani Nayagam is founder and Chief Editor of this Journal. He is a member of the Department of Education, University of Ceylon.

Mr. T. P. Meenakshisundaram is the Chief Professor of Tamil, Presidency College, Madras.

Dr. A. Jeyaratnam Wilson is Lecturer in Political Science, University of Ceylon.

Mr. K. Kodandapani Pillai, retired Controller of Emigration, Madras is a scholar who has made a critical study of Sangam works. He has written and published literary criticism of some of the poems of the Sangam period.

Mr. S. J. Gunasegaram, Member, Tamil Cultural Society, Ceylon.

Dr. A Chidambaranatha Chettiar is Professor and Head of the Department of Tamil, Annamalai University.

The Philosophic stage of development in Sangam Literature

XAVIER S. THANI NAYAGAM

The social setting

The influence of the poet-educator tradition is contained not only in the Sangam anthologies but is also implied in numerous references and legends conserved in post-Sangam literature.[1] One of the most persistent of these centres around the *Sangams* or Poetic Academies, which existed from very ancient times, and which admitted to membership Tamil poets of distinction and set the stamp of collective approval on literary works. The earliest detailed account of three successive Academies functioning over long eras, and each academic period including several generations of poets, occurs in a work compiled about the tenth century B.C.,[2] and the antiquity, duration and number of poets attributed to each Academic period seem so fanciful and so reminiscent of the Jain passion for numbers that the veracity of the details of the tradition and the tradition itself has been questioned by scholars.[3] That there were regular assemblies of poets during the poetic period, that their compositions oral or written were in circulation, and that they were known by their compositions and fame even when not known by personal acquaintance, and that the poets met at royal courts is clear from the poems.[3a] The Academy tradition, which

1 Regarding Sangam and post-Sangam literature, see S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR, *Ancient India and South Indian History and Culture,* op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 577 ff.

2 *Irayanar Ahapporul.*

3 Three Academies are commonly mentioned; the first lasting 4,440 years, the second for 3,700 years and the third for 1,850 years. The Third Academy would have ended circa 200 A.D.

3(a) *Puram.*, 39, 8, 58, 9, 266, 8-9.

is so persistent in later Tamil literature, is an indication of a core of historical truth around which has grown a mass of legendary embellishment. The Academy tradition in Tamil is one of the earliest references to a normative literary body among a people.

The transition from the period in which the poet is the prominent educator of society to the period in which the philosopher becomes the prominent educator is gradual. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that these stages overlap and are named after the most prominent and distinctive educator-type of a certain period, and that the prominence of one type during a specific period does not exclude the functional activities of the rest during the same period. The shaman, the bard, the poet and the philosopher are always present in society, but the fourth stage of development, which is portrayed in this article, brings to the fore the philosopher, both religious and secular.[4]

The bard and much more the poet, by the metaphysical abstractions involved in ideals such as *aretē, puhal, mānam* (glory, honour), *ṛta, dharma* and *aram* (cosmic and moral order, righteousness), and by constant references to moral and ethical problems of justice and honesty and exhortations to bravery, kindness and generosity have initiated the steps leading to formal philosophy. The intuitive insight of the poet now gives place to the organising wisdom of the philosopher, the humanist philosopher who believes in his self-sufficiency, and the religious philosopher who elaborates on a doctrine he claims to have been revealed, or which has been handed down by a tradition to which he gives the reverence that another gives to a revelation. For even revelation, which has originated with the

[4] See MORRIS GINSBERG, *On the Diversity of Morals*, Essay on *The Concept of Evolution in Sociology*, p. 182:

"It is clear that there is no single order of development nor can any given form of an institution be invariably correlated with a determinate stage or phase of culture taken as a whole".

shaman and his priestly-prophetic role, undergoes a philosophic "processing" and rendering at a certain stage of religious development.[5]

The social configuration within which the philosopher emerges is the City, and often in island and peninsular countries like the Tamil kingdoms a harbour-city or a king's capital. It is so in the urban milieu traced in the Jain and Buddhist sources; it is equally verified in the Athens and the Corinth of the Greek philosophic movement, and in the Kaverippaṭṭinam, Kūdal (Madurai), Vanci and Kānci of the "epic period" as the *Silappatikāram-Maṇimēkalai* epoch is commonly known in the history of Tamil literature. The descriptions of a chess-board development of a city-plan and of the *quartiéres* occupied by various trades and professions, the day market-place and the night market-place, the multi-lingual residences of foreign merchants, the quays heaped with exports and imports stamped with the Customs seal, the multitude of ships riding at anchor, the well-lit roads at night, the various temples, monasteries and preaching rostra of a multi-religious population and the assembly halls are common features of any large city in which culture-contacts resulting from a plural society occasion the creativity and the stir of the spirit.[6]

> "As in festivals many and diverse groups mingle together, so people speaking different tongues who have left their own countries live here in harmony".[6a]

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5 CHRISTOPHER DAWSON, *Religion and Culture*, op. cit., p. 43: "The continuity between the primitive tradition of divination and shamanism and the higher developments of philosophic thought is to be seen even in Greek philosophy with Empedocles and the Pythagoreans — not to mention the daemon of Socrates — and in the Eastern religions the connection is still closer and more unmistakable". See JOACHIM WACHS, *The Sociology of Religion*, op. cit.

6 *Silap.*, V, 7-58; *Mani.*, XXVIII, 29-68.

6 (a) *Pattinappalai* 214-217.

The monarch and his subjects are conscious of a "sense of empire", sometimes territorial, often commercial, [7] and the new exigencies of statecraft and citizenship demand not panegyrics with incidental moralising, but specialised treatises on social and individual problems cast in the mould of cryptic, condensed verse to be easily memorised and thus become common property, or personified and hypostatised in the dramatic characters of literary and polemical epics so as to be presented as types for imitation or rejection. [8]

Lewis Mumford's lyrical description of city life is valid for any city of antiquity :

> "Through its complex orchestration of time and space, no less than through the social division of labour, life in the city takes on the character of a symphony : specialised human aptitudes, specialised instruments, give rise to sonorous results which, neither in volume nor in quality, could be achieved by any single piece ".[9]

The Tamil poet who, probably because of an earlier tradition, retained a fascination for a city-culture thought himself as paying the highest compliment to woman when he called her literally "cultured as a city" meaning that she was as abundant, as resourceful and as symphonic in being a source of a total enrichment of personality. [10] For in the city were found the means and measures of intellectual and emotional development, the philosopher disputing in the market place, the preacher in his rostrum, the ritual in the temple, music and dance in the public hall by virtuosi, and other fair sights and sounds. [11] Occupational specialisation has been so developed as a result of the new urban economy that there are more occupational groups in one

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7 *Ibid.*, 185-193 ; See third part of *Silap.*

8 Both *Silap* and *Mani* may be considered didactic poems.

9 *Culture of Cities, Introduction;* See also GRIFFITH TAYLOR, *Urban Geography,* Second edition, Methuen, London, 1951.
F. HAVERFIELD, *Ancient Town Planning,* Oxford, 1953.

10 The explanation given by commentators. See XAVIER S. THANI NAYAGAM, *Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry,* p. 169 f.

11 *Silap.,* V ; *Pattinappalai,* 155 ff ; Mani., I.

single city than might have been found in an entire kingdom served by a simple agrarian economy.[12] There is a considerable foreign element in the city besides those whose interests are mercantile and naval; foreign soldiers from the Roman Empire keep guard in the city and the palace, the war camp and the city defences, and "skilled artisans from Magadha, mechanics from Marātam, smiths from Avanti and Yavana carpenters" contribute to the foreign architectural and other artistic influences which are among the imports due to foreign trade and conquests.[13]

The culture of the city guarantees the democratisation of Education and the Arts and shifts the scene of culture and art from the palace to the houses of merchant princes, the temples and monasteries and the forum and the market place. It creates men of culture and taste even among non-professionals. Kōvalan, the hero in the *Silappatikāram* is a merchant prince, but his accomplishments are more than mercantile; he is a composer of impromptu lyrics of great beauty and a skilful player on the lute who finds music a solace to him at a time of distress.[14] Music and dance are no more the exclusive property of the bard and his troupe. The entertainment which is at a popular level in the village becomes formal and highly technicalised in the city. Music and dance are cultivated by professionals and they have become subjects of formal scientific study. Mātavi, the professional danseuse, begins learning her art at the age of five under a consummate master skilled in dance and poetry and drama. Her first public appearance after a seven-year course of intense training is on a stage which conforms to long established norms, and professional musicians, each a master in his own instrument, are the members of her accompanying orchestra.[15] Modern scholars are unable to explain the highly technical data and musical learning incidentally furnished about

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12 *Silap.*, V.
13 *Mani.*, XIX, 107-109; *Silap.*, V, 99-110.
14 *Silap.*, XIII, 102-114.
15 *Silap.*, III.

Tamil dance and music in the "epic-period". One critic has asserted that Equal Temperament, said to be found by Hayden in the eighteenth century, was no secret to the Tamil musicians of the *Silappatikāram* epoch.[16] The professional danseuse, who now belongs to a courtesan class, and the professional musician acquire by no means a reputation for moral behaviour.[16a]

The democratisation is apparent not only in the Fine Arts but even more so in the teaching of religion and philosophy. The different secular and religious philosophies at this epoch appear as full and well-developed systems in the local cultural and language matrix. The twenty-seventh canto of *Maṇimēkalai* contains the exposition of all the Indian systems of philosophy and religion, those originating in the Vedas and those originating outside of it.[17] These systems are propagated by philosopher teachers not only in esoteric gatherings but also in the market place and the public square after the fashion of the Agora, the forum and Hyde Park Corner. Each philosophic school has its own banner which it flies above the booth of its representatives.[18] They hold disputations in the market place and these disputations, expositions and Purānic and bardic recitations are special attractions at the time of the great annual festivals. In the Cōḷa capital, Puhār, the annual festival in honour of Indra which lasted a month was held to be an occasion for such religious and philosophical exposition. The herald in *Maṇimēkalai* when announcing Indra's festival includes :

> "Let those who teach philosophy, politics, logic and religion not leave the city .... Let those well-versed in ethical lore take their place under awnings or in cano-

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16 See M. ABRAHAM PANDITHAR, *Karunamrtasagaram,* Madras, 1917.

BERYL DE ZOETE, *The other Mind,* Gollanz, London, 1952.

16 (a) *Mani.,* XVIII, 107 ff.

17 See S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR, *Manimekhalai and its Historical Setting,* pp. 54-107, Luzac and Company, London, 1927.

ID., *The Buddhism of Manimekhalai* in *Buddhistic Studies* (Ed. B. C. LAW), Thacker, Calcutta, 1931.

18 *Pattinappalai,* 170 ff ; Cf. *Maduraikanci,* 370 ff.

pied halls. Let those well-versed in religious lore assemble in the halls of learning set apart for discussions ".[19]

These philosopher-teachers, especially the religious philosophers, are found visiting important cities of the Tamil country like Kānci, Uraiyūr, Madurai and Vanci, and are also found preaching or on pilgrimage outside the Tamil country in oversea territory. Aṟavaṇa Adigal, the Buddhist philosopher, is found at Kaverippaṭṭinam, Kānci and Vanci, at Maṇipallavam and in Northern India.[20] Kavunti Adikal, the Jain ascetic, accompanies Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki from Kaverippaṭṭinam to Madurai iṇ order to listen to the teachings of the great ascetics.[21] In the Jain and the Buddhist Tamil books, the preachers of the Dharma (Dharma-Cāranas) course through the heavens and land on earth at will to impart instruction. Manimēkalai, the Buddhist heroiṇe, and other preachers are thus granted the boon of space-travel and thus they are able to impart their teachings in different cities of the Tamil country and in other countries which they visit.[22] The *Manimēkalai* gives grouṇds to the inference that strong religious contacts were established between Tamil India on the one hand and Ceylon, Java and other lands and islands bordering the Bay of Bengal just as the Silappatikāram mentions commercial contacts. This infereṇce is confirmed by the similarity of the cave inscriptions in Ceylon and South India, and by the history of the Dhammarucci sect at the Abhayagiri monastery, and the relations between the Buddhist monks of the Cōḷa country and the Buddhist monks of Anuradhapura.[23] It is during this epoch that Kaverippaṭṭinam, Uraiyūr, Madurai, Kānci and Vanci become strong centres of the religions which originated in Northern

19 *Mani.*, I, 10-14., 58-64.
20 E.g., *Mani* XIV, 95 ff.
21 *Silap.*, X, 56-57.
22 See references to *Dharmacaranas; Silap,* X, 162; Mani, XXIV, 46-47.
23 E.g., *Mahavamsa*, XXXVI, 111 ff. See WALPOLA RAHULA, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, op. cit., p. 84 ff.

India. Kānci (Conjeevaram) especially, is important in the history of the spread of Tamil Buddhism in foreign countries.[24]

THE HUMANIST CODEX

The secular humanism which was the characteristic note of the poetic period finds in the philosophic period a developed and codified, though cryptic, expression in the gnomic poetry of the *Tirukkural*. It is a work of one thousand three hundred and thirty couplets of gnomic verse, and not all the verses or the distribution of the verses into parts, chapters and appendices is to be attributed to the chief author. It is likely that it is not an anthology, but it is equally likely that it has been edited and interpolated in order to make it more conformable to patterns of *āsramas* (stages of life), renunciation and asceticism introduced by religions originating in Northern India. In its substance and in its distinctive ideals and patterns of thought it may be taken to contain the quintessence of the Tamil secular, humanistic thought which developed out of the poetic period.

Every non-Tamil who has been introduced to this book of maxims has attributed to it a unique place in world literature. The earliest record of a non-Indian use of this classic is to be found in Fernao de Queyroz's *Conquest of Ceylon* in which the Franciscan missionary, Fra Joam de Vila Conde, in a religious debate at the court of Bhuvanaika Bahu of Kotte, Ceylon, (1521-1551) cites the *Tirukkural* in support of the doctrines which he preaches.[25] The Italian literary genius and Jesuit missionary, Guiseppe

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24 CHARLES ELIOT, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, op. cit., Vol., III, p. 5 ff.
M. S. VENKADASAMY, *Buddhism and Tamil*, op. cit., p. 25 ff.
C. NARAYANA RAO, *The Brahmi Inscriptions of South India*, N.I.A., Vol., I, (1938-39) pp. 362-376.

25 FERNAO DE QUEYROZ, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, Colombo Government Press, 1930, Book II, p. 241:
" Read one of the books you have, which you have maliciously hidden, composed by Valuer, a native of Melipur and a contemporary of St. Thomas. There you will find the union of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son, the Redemption of Man, the

Costanzio Beschi (d. 1742), translated a major portion of the Tamil classic into Latin and compared it to the maxims of Senecca. After Beschi, it has been translated in whole or in part into the chief European languages.[26] Dr. Albert Schweitzer is perhaps the best-known among those who have invited the attention of scholars to this work, of which he says :

> " There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find such lofty wisdom ".[27]

Dr. Pope had said earlier of the work :

> " Something of the same kind is found in Greek epigrams, in Martial and Latin elegiac verse. There is a beauty in the periodic character of the verses that reminds the reader of the happiest efforts of Propertius ".[28]

The *Tirukkural* has been compared with other books of gnomic verse but not always with justification. It has been compared with the *Dhammapāda,* but the comparison is valid only for those verses which treat of asceticism and renunciation and certain ethical norms. The *Dhammapāda's* central themes are the monastic way of life, the extinction of desire and the realisation of *Nirvāna,* but the *Tirukkural* is primarily a codex of social ethics and wisdom for a married man in the world. Its portions dealing with statecraft have been compared with Kauṭilya, and the resemblances are more due to the identity of topics which are

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cause of his fall, the remedy for his faults and miseries and finally the preservation of his state ".

The passage is quoted because of its missiological interest and not for its scholastic accuracy.

26 See Dr. G. U. POPE, *The Sacred Kural,* Oxford University Press, London, 1886.

G. DE BRRIGUE DE FOINTENAU, *Le Livre de L'Amour de Tirouvalluva,* Paris, 1889.

KARL GRAUL, *Der Kural des Tiruvalluvar,* Leipzig, 1856 (Latin and German translations).

W.H. DREW, *The Kural of Tiruvalluvar.*

27 ALBERT SCHWEITZER, *Indian Thought and its Development,* op. cit., pp. 200-205.

28 G. U. POPE. *The Sacred Kural,* op. cit., p. VI.

B. C. LAW, *Tirukkural et Dhammapada* in *Journal Asiatique,* 1952, p. 37 ff.

treated than to direct borrowing. However, the author of the *Tirukkural* seems to have been very familiar with the religious and secular literature of his day in the Tamil, Sanskrit and Pāli works. Hence parallel passages found in other books and modes of expression and allusions have led critics to attribute different religious origins to the author. Atheists and agnostics have claimed the *Tirukkural* as their own book ; Hindu schools of thought have claimed that the *Tirukkural* is the codex of their particular way of life ; Jains and Buddhists have each claimed the book as their own, and Christian scholars have seen in it traces of the influence of primitive Christianity in the Tamil country and of the teachings of St. Thomas the Apostle who is said to have lived in Mylapore, the locality where Tiruvaḷḷuvar, the author, is also said to have lived.[29] None of these conflicting claims can be sustained though every one of them may find certain verses in its support. They are another witness to the non-confessional nature, universality of outlook and the humanistic appeal of this classic. With the exception of the ascetic and non-killing ideals propounded in the book, the major and significant elements of its thought are to be traced to the Sangam anthologies.

The gnomic verse was in Ancient India the literary technique even of philosophy, and the wisdom of centuries was consigned to cryptic verses in order to aid the memory. Thus where Plato may have written a dialogue or Aristotle and Quintilian a treatise, the Indian teacher composed a few mnemonic verses and expounded them orally so that listening to instruction (sruti, kēḷvi) became the more important aspect of formal education. The *Tirukkural* is both retrospective and prospective in its contents ; it reflects the knowledge and wisdom of its period, but is also original in its daring flashes of genius and intuition, and a number of verses are surprising in their modernity and universality.

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29 See note 25 above and G. U. POPE, *The Sacred Kural*, op. cit.

> Because of Humanists that this world exists
> Else one would have to bury oneself in the earth. (996)

Or consider the following distichs:

> The promise of piles of millions would never make
> The truly noble do a degrading deed. (954)
> The world worships the lustre of those
> Who would rather die than have their Honour blemished. (970)
> Of what avail is Wisdom if it does not render good
> Even to those who have done evil. (978)
> If the Wise were to grow less in their Wisdom
> The Earth itself would be unable to bear its burden. (990)
> Vile Persons are equal to the Gods
> Because they also act as they please. (1073)

Here is a couplet which says that education is a life-long process because many are the countries and peoples about whom knowledge is possible:

> Since every town is one's own town, and every country is one's own country
> How can a man fail to learn until his death ? (397)

And another speaks of the need for humour and laughter:

> To those without a sense of humour
> The World must indeed seem dark even amidst the blaze of noon. (999)

The *Tirukkural* is not a formal treatise on education but more a manual describing the ideals of an educated man, the virtues he should cultivate and the vices he should avoid in both public and private life. It conceives him as a member of a family, of a community and of the State and reflects on the aspects of his life as a lover, a husband, a parent, a friend, a citizen and a man of public affairs. There is a unity in the description of the Ideal Personality in the book.

The verses relating to learning and education and the prestige and duties of the learned are to be found not only in the decades on Learning, on Ignorance and on Listening to Teachers, but are scattered throughout the first two

parts of the book in decades entitled by redactors as Gift of Sons, Philosophic Intuition, Truth, Friendship, Honour, Glory, Greatness, Excellence, Public Speaking, Initiative, Little Learning and Humanism. The *Tirukkural* does not so much adopt the prescriptive and prohibitive language of religious gnomic verse; it adopts mostly a style of discursive reflection. It presupposes the existence of a society very advanced in its political and civic organisation, and takes for granted that formal education under competent teachers is in existence, and that formal instruction is the condition of self-realisation, of social ethics and civic success. The warrior outlook of the average citizen present in an earlier society is absent since a specialised army is maintained by the King for defence and conquest. The citizen has, therefore, greater opportunities to take to the arts of peace. The citizen is urged to lose himself in the pursuit of objectives which contain primarily a social reference. His children are his delight; hospitality and entertainment are almost the purpose of home-life, and liberality combined with sweetness and urbanity are the marks of gracious living.

Formal education consists in learning (kēḷvi) as well as "hearing instruction" from the lips of the learned, and in association with them. The content of formal education is "Letters and Numbers" which are compared to the two eyes with which the educated man looks upon the world, and are terms which today would be interpreted as Arts and Science and which, in the days of the author, implied the same categorisation but without the extensive semantic application they have today. (392) Those who are not "educated are blind" (393) and " the want of discernment which comes from want of learning" is of all wants the most pitiful. (841)

The primary aim of formal education and of home training is to make the Sānṟon or the Complete Man. The word, which in a warrior society meant a brave and consummate warrior, now stands for an *ideal* to be realised, a

man possessed of wisdom and learning who makes his contribution to happiness in the home, in the social community and in the State. A father's happiness consists in providing for an education which will make his son more learned than the father himself (68) and it is his duty to see that his son by his learning and his practical wisdom gains recognition in assemblies of learned men (67). The mother's joy on hearing that her son has qualified for such recognition is greater than the joy she experienced on knowing a man-child had been born to her (69). To have intelligent children is the greatest privilege a man can have, for all the world acclaims a parent that has given birth to a recognised "*sānron*" (61, 70).

The student is to study thoroughly (391) and philosophically understanding the essence of every problem (355), and is to examine with discernment and criticism what he hears, no matter the authority from which it comes (423). His scholastic achievement will be in proportion to his industry and application (396). At the same time he is to conduct himself with humility before his teachers like the needy who await gifts from the wealthy (395).

The advantages of learning are manifold. It overcomes class prejudice (409) ; it dispels the darkness of the mind and bestows happiness (352) ; it confers the friends, the wealth and the reputation without which life becomes dismal and insecure.

Thus through a great many aphoristic reflections, the *Tirukkural* instructs the ideal man that through learning, through instruction received from the learned and through association with them he should cultivate the highest ideals of service and altruism, hospitality, generosity and positive love, and do good for its own sake.[30]

> The loveless man takes everything for himself
> The man full of love — even his own bones belong to
> others. (72)

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30 ALBERT SCHWEITZER, *Indian Thought and its Development*, op. cit., p. 205.

Even though there is no other world it is still good to give. (222)

True liberality seeks no return
What return does the rain-cloud expect of the world? (211)

The ethics of the *Tirukkural* and the ideals of living proposed therein are all based upon instruction, initiation and reflection, and the author understands education as co-terminous with life. He defines and elaborates on the *concepts and abstractions* of a previous period like " glory " and " honour ", which now shed their militaristic associations and assume an ethical and intellectual meaning and a universal value. He pursues the idea and the association of learning with light and brilliance and conceives ignorance as darkness (243, 299, 352, 410). " Red " appears to be the colour associated with goodness and learning, and " whiteness " symbolises ignorance and intellectual and moral bankruptcy. (358, 844)

The doctrines of karmic causality and rebirth are very explicit in the *Tirukkural,* and learning is said to be so effective that knowledge acquired during one birth carried its beneficial effects through future births. But even here the author, with an ethical background of "goodness for its own sake ", suggests the continuity of the effects of knowledge through rebirth not as a motive and inducement for ethical excellence, but as the inevitable happy consequence of the ideal life. Giving birth to learned children results in a good life during the seven series of future births (62) ; the learning acquired during one birth accompanies a man through his series of future births (398) ; the folly which comes from want of learning may cause karmic evil consequences during the seven series of future births (835, 966).

The Complete Man, who is the ideal portrayed in the *Tirukkural,* is a man of public affairs such as the Sophists, Cicero and Quintilian portray[31] : the nobility of his birth

[31] See M. L. CLARKE, *Rhetoric at Rome,* Cohen and West, London, 1953.

and the unmistakable signs of a cultured family upbringing are not shown by his caste or occupation but by the nobility of his conduct, his ideals, his attitudes and traits (975, 973, 505). In a society in which oral speech was the predominant mode of communication in social, political and educational life, the book insists on the external marks of a mature personality, pleasant looks, pleasant inoffensive speech, tact, and on eloquence. Eloquence is indispensable to the men of learning, to messengers and ambassadors. A man is like a flower without fragrance if he cannot expose clearly to other men what he has learnt (650, 717). The world rushes to listen to those who have oratorical skill (648) ; and both wealth and righteousness are built up by the discreet use of language as a means of communication (644). A man's learning is of no avail if he cannot face audiences of learned or ignorant people.

> Thousands would die facing the enemy on the battle-
> field
> But few there are who would face an assembly. (723)
> What have cowards to do with swords ?
> What have those who fear subtle distinctions to do with
> Books ? (726)

The acquisition of wealth is important because poverty is of no help in the procuring of happiness in this life (247). Even learning loses its lustre and is rendered ineffective when accompanied by poverty (1046). Wealth and even conjugal love are but means of attaining a perfection of socialised behaviour so that through the enrichment of personality, which love and hospitality exercised because of wealth bring about, Man may lose himself in altruistic love and happiness (72, 81).

Educational and social thought in the *Tirukkural* would require a separate book to itself if it were to be considered under its philosophic, ethical, social and psychological aspects. It is not a metaphysical work ; it is concerned with practical aims, and the ideals it traces may be best compared to the practical ideals which Quintilian outlined in Rome about the same period.

Thiru T. V. K. - the Living

T. P. MEENAKSHI SUNDARAM

T. V. K. is no more with us. He was great, not in wealth or in power, but in knowledge and in the milk of human kindness ; and yet he was like a child in the hands of his friends and followers. His acquaintances feel this personal loss. Presiding over meetings, he had encouraged many dumb men, so to say, to become seasoned orators ; sitting in the editorial chair he had encouraged many a novice become, in the end, editors, by publishing in the beginning their maiden attempts even at the cost of forfeiting the security paid for his *Desabhaktan* under the Press Act. That was an age when Tamil was yet a vernacular, the language of the slaves ; when the speakers thought it was beneath their dignity to talk or write in Tamil, when even lovers of Tamil felt a kind of nervousness in expressing themselves in Tamil, when the audience felt that the Pandits spoke above their heads.

It was good fortune that T. V.K. moved in all these circles and by his unobtrusive influence, encouragement, and example revolutionised this atmosphere. Many a modern poet, editor, labour-leader, politician and philosopher of Tamil Nad has confessed his debt to this departed great soul. All that, is the effect of his magnetic personality, his loving heart, his contagious learning—alas ! no more to be experienced. It is the inevitable end of every life on this planet. His basic contributions to the growth and development in the Tamil land of the various modern movements of the National Indian Congress, of Labour, of Socialism, of cosmopolitanism, of religious reform, and of literary renaissance have all become eclipsed ; he was, as it were, their seed and the nursling ; but these have taken root so firmly, grown so high, and

spread so extensively, all through the Tamil land, that we see no more the seed or the nursling. All that, we saw when he was alive. Will his name live in Tamil literature in the sphere of immortality ? —that is a much more important question to the readers of *Tamil Culture.*

T. V. K. was a born orator and it was as such, that he helped the various movements to develop. His writings but hold up the mirror to his oratory. Some of his works had been first delivered as speeches and presidential addresses. In the last part of his life, the books and even his introductions were couched in the form of speeches or heart to heart talks ; thus he brought a refreshing extemporaneity to his speeches which were otherwise characterised by a uniformity and a system.

This is a new approach to prose—to write as we speak, not colloquially but elegantly, as on the platform. Only alliteration and assonance of poetic rhythm abounded in the prose of the earlier age. He himself wrote the life of his Tamil Teacher, Katirverpillai, in that florid style. I remember one striking caption ' Nīlagirikku ēki Nīlakaṇṭar āṉār '. But long-drawn sentences have no place in speech. The sentences in speech, become short and effective, forceful and living. There were other writers who preceded him in this attempt — an attempt which was inevitable when books had to be written to the school-going population. Publication of Tamil books was becoming a trade and the writers had to cater to the needs of the many who were not learned. There were others whose very instincts prompted them to write in their natural rhythm of simple prose ; and they brought clarity and sweetness ; but their writings lacked virility and force. Perhaps the subject matters discussed,—statements about literature, morals and religion—allowed, under the prevailing standard, no room for emotional outbursts, though in the debates carried on in writing, there was any amount of vituperation. There were certain attempts at exciting humour but they were vulgar. These writers could not reach the golden mean ;

they could be either colourless and serene, or vulgar and vituperative. The traces of the earlier prose were found in the, padding of the thoughts in a sentence with a series of 'enpatum' (என்பதும்) which sometimes retained the older form of the poetic prose 'enpatuum' (என்பதூஉம்) Even in T. V. K., the last part of a speech or writing summarising the whole speech, contains in the most appropriate way this much maligned word.

As an orator on the labour front, on the Congress platform, on the plank of social reform, he appeared as a firebrand, but all the same, as a dignified literary speaker who never played to the gallery. It was always a mystery to many critics, how he held his audience spell-bound, without any appeal to humour. He always appealed to higher and more sublime emotions. He could inspire us with a love for Nature, painting her in all her glories. He could arouse in us a righteous indignation against injustice. He could make us weep over the miseries of the poor. Sometimes, his speech, when analysed later in cold print, looked as ordinary statements of facts, made from a higher detached pedestal of learned Tamil. But, when first spoken, even those ordinary statements came with such a vigour and vitality that the audience felt a sort of communion with the speaker. His was not the oratory of a lawyer but the song of a feeling heart. He never acted the part of others; he always expressed himself. Every word came from the bottom of his heart with the colourful glow of his feelings. He was through and through, a man of feelings—not their slave but as an artist their master; this was very patent when he was on the platform. The beauty of his language is the ordered pattern of his feelings.

T. V. K. was nothing if not original, though he always harped on asserting that what he stated were all old truths of Tamil land—not a pretension but a sincere feeling of his. Satyagraha to him was as old as Appar; social reform was

as old as Tevaram and Cankam Poets. He was the man of the future but speaking to us as the apostle of the Golden past. This itself was indeed original—a new appeal to the orthodoxy which would have condemned the new as heterodoxy. It was not a revolution — a breaking away from the past but a return to the hoary past and sacred Nature. Communism when shorn of its materialism is but to be 'At the Feet of the Arhat'. His learning helped him to popularise modern views as ancient thought. Tamil literature thus ceased to be for the chosen few: it was brought to the market place, true to the principles of modern democracy.

His style reflects this originality; but the ancient words —like ஏற்றுக்கு 'eṟṟukku' அண்ணல் 'Aṇṇal'—live in his works. He is the master of the short sentences—one way of making easy the complicated thoughts. With the varying lengths of the short sentences he created a rhythm of his own. The sentences of the earlier prose become his paragraphs. These earlier sentences though having marks of rhythm such as alliteration, had no real rhythm but a kind of droning sometime appearing as strangling all rhythm. But the paragraph of T. V. K. has a rhythm of its own, a rhythm of his thought and feeling, a variation therein introducing a different paragraph. Paragraph construction thus becomes natural and simple without the necessity for any elaborate systematisation.

The short sentences lead to the creation of many telling phrases and a few catch words—rather epigrams, which are the very life of modern journalism of which, in the sense of an art, he was a pioneer himself. He never indulged in any slang. The Tamilian ear caught the natural music of its language. Kalki contrasted passages from journals written before and after the advent of T. V. K. It is not that he discarded Sanskrit words as such. He avoided all jargon and made the language living, by accepting the rhythm of the age. The rhythm of the language changes from age to age, as may be realised by reading

aloud the Cankam poems, Tevaram hymns, Kambar's stanzas, Tayumanavar's songs and Bharati's verses.

He had his own head lines. The modern slogans in Tamil were not of his making but were made possible by the trend of his prose. By keeping his language away from the quick sand of dead alliteration and the quagmire of fatal assonance, he kept it always full of vitality and vigour. The living language thus brought into higher regions of pure air, can breathe the ozone of alliteration and assonance wherever the ozone occurs in nature. நுணங்கு மொழி வல்லார்க்கு வணங்கு மொழி விண்ணப்பம் "Nuṇanku moḻi vallārkku vaṇanku moḻi vinnappam" was the title of a learned article in those early days. அனுச்சாரக் கும்பலை எதிர்க்கும் கலாச்சாரக்கூட்டம் "Anācārak kumpalai etirkkum kalācārakkūttam" is what we hear today. வேங்கடத்தை விடோம் விடோம், குமரியைக் கொடோம் கொடோம் "Vēnkaṭattai vitōm viṭōm ; Kumariyaik kotōm, koṭōm" are powerful slogans which do not appear, except when closely analysed, to be a live fire of alliteration. He has himself popularised the cries of his audience— வாழ்க, வெல்க 'Vaḻka', 'Velka'—cries to be raised when the appropriate first word, தமிழ் 'Tamil' புரட்சி 'Puratci' அறம், காந்தி 'Aram' or 'Gandhi' was uttered by him.

An orator can make any theory plausible : that is how the profession of lawyers originally thrived as sophism. The mercenary orator of election times has become known to us all through the election platforms. But this is a prostitution of an art. This art in virgin purity, understands all points of views with a sympathetic or empathetic heart, which is the very foundation of all arts. The universalism and cosmopolitanism—the Samarasa of T. V. K.—is another fruit of the 'Man as Orator'. His is the voice of Nature ; the clarion call of Freedom, the mouthpiece of the oppressed and suppressed—the labourer, the women and Harijans— and the song of brotherhood. His worship of Nature opened our eyes to the glories of Nature surrounding us every-

where and always. His deification of womanhood made us realise that we were all sons of our mothers. Brotherhood of Man, in the Social, Religious, Political spheres, was his very life-breath. In no speech, did he ever fail to impress on his audience these great truths. We saw him bridging the past with the future. Apart from this bridge of Time, he constructed a bridge in space—connecting the thoughts of the West with the thoughts of the East, perhaps another aspect of the Time bridge, connecting modern and ancient thoughts. He had expressed all modern thoughts of history, science, philosophy and politics in Tamil, revealing the wonderful possibilities of Tamil as a vehicle of modern thought. These thoughts have come to live, thanks to his speeches and writings, especially because of his attempt at revealing them as reflections of the ancient ideals of our own country. The language which was considered rigid, about to break on account of the gigantic weight of modern thought, was made pliable in his hands, very much like gold drawn into various desired shapes by an artist of an expert goldsmith. His style therefore breathes a new aroma of modernity—all as usual original to him. His poems reveal the same personality but they have to be studied separately. His history of Indian freedom, his autobiography, his philosophical and psychological work *Ulloli,* his essays on Murukan and Saivism, his political addresses in *Tamil Tenral,* his introductions to various works like *Sivajnanabhodam, Nedunalvadai, Metaittamil,* and *Periyapuranam,* his exposition of Tayumanavar, Nammalvar and Ramalingar, his explanation of Gandhism, Feminism, Love and Communism are original masterpieces of Tamilian thought and modern Tamil, standing unique as the great and loveable, permanent and valuable contributions of this father of modern oratory in Tamil.

Cultural and Language Rights in the Multi-National Society

A. JEYARATNAM WILSON

Democracy is a variable term which will have a different connotation in different societies. In the West, it proved a considerable success for a number of reasons. Most important of these reasons was that the countries which adopted democratic political institutions enjoyed a fair degree of economic prosperity and a considerable uniformity in the spheres of religion and language. The United Kingdom which is so often referred to as the classic home of parliamentary democracy has the vast majority of its inhabitants voluntarily adopting the English language and at the same time practising the Protestant faith. The same is true of France and the Netherlands. No doubt these countries have their minorities but these are generally treated well and regarded as equal partners. What is more, no serious attempt has been made to discriminate against them in the economic sphere. All these countries possess exploitable colonies and the problem of want is not so pressing as to warrant discrimination against the weaker communities. The colonies can always absorb the economically depressed sections. It is significant to note that Scotsmen, as long as they found suitable avenues of employment in the British Empire, were willing to accept the hegemony of the English. But with a contracting Empire and a deteriorating economy, the movement of Scottish nationalism has gained an added impetus. The same is true of Wales.

All this leads us to the question whether the Westminster model can thrive in the multi-national society. The new countries of India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon and

Malaya owe their creation to the administrative unification brought about by British rule. Their societies are not homogeneous in the sense that Western societies are. They are not economically prosperous in the way that Western countries have been and still are. To transplant political institutions of the Western type is a dangerous innovation which might therefore require serious modification. The rule of a racial or religious majority is often equated to democracy. But this conception of democracy is altogether alien to the liberal traditions of Britain and even France and the Netherlands. Men in these countries have tended to divide more on economic, social or political issues rather than on communal grounds. The reason for this is that these countries were fortunate in that they possessed a considerable degree of cultural and linguistic uniformity.

Democracy therefore does not imply the rule of a communal majority. If this were its definition, then the nation state could not have emerged. For democracy to function successfully, there must be some degree of uniformity. If this uniformity is not forthcoming, then an effort must be made to satisfy the lesser communities that exist within the confines of the artificial limits that were created by a century or more of British rule in the countries of Asia.

Basically, democracy implies toleration, the acceptance of diversity of opinion and the right to offer constitutional opposition to lawfully constituted government. But these do not exhaust the essentials of democracy especially where multi-national societies are concerned. They might prove satisfactory in comparatively homogeneous societies where political parties tend to think along socio-economic lines. Even in such comparatively homogeneous societies, there might be differences based on religion or class. But if the people mingle freely and speak the same language, some of the dangers immanent in a multi-national society can usually be avoided. It is true that at different stages, there was religious persecution in Britain. Protestant and Roman Catholics suffered alike though at

different periods. Nonconformism was once frowned at. Anglicanism was made the privileged religion despite opposition. The English language was imposed on the Scots, Welsh and Irish. But these attempts, though initially successful, were undertaken at considerable expense. The result is that there is religious toleration in Britain. The Scots and Welsh accepted the English language and acknowledged English hegemony but harmony prevailed so long as the resources of a vast Empire were opened to them. To-day, with depressed conditions and an Empire almost gone, there are nationalist movements gaining ground both in Scotland and Wales. The Irish refused to submit to the Protestant overlordship of the British and the price paid for practising harsh intolerance was the secession of Southern Ireland. Thus even in the home of classic parliamentary institution, there was social disorder and even bloodshed when attempts were made to impose uniformity. A useful lesson was learned in the process. Politicians realized that if the national fabric was not to be torn asunder, then their organisations must refrain from appealing to parochial sentiments. Political leaders in Britain therefore generally realise that in the interests of the nation as a whole, they must refrain from causing offence to the weaker partners that exist in their midst.

The situation in comparatively homogeneous countries is however much less complex than that which prevails in multi-national societies. Leadership in such societies, especially from the majority sector, has a much more difficult role to play. A short cut to power may be found by raising religious, language or caste cries but when power has been won under such circumstances, promises have to be fulfilled and the consequences might indeed be grave and irreparable. Oppression of a linguistic minority might if successful be followed by the practising of discrimination against religious minorities or caste groups. The attitude of Edmund Burke to Britain's treatment of the American colonists is worth noting in this context. Condemning the

denial of fundamental rights by the Government of George III, Burke declared, " Armies first victorious over Englishmen, in a conflict for English constitutional rights and privileges, and afterwards habituated (though in America) to keep an English people in a state of abject subjection, would prove fatal in the end to the liberties of England itself ". The true method for Burke was to find a way of peace. " Nobody shall persuade me ", he told a hostile House of Commons, " when a whole people are concerned that acts of lenity are not means of conciliation ". " The question with me " he stated " is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy ". These are principles worthy of emulation by majority political leaders. To encourage racialism and intolerance at the political level would mean undermining the foundations of national solidarity. Permanent damage might be done. The problem is more serious in countries which have won independence anew. Minorities here, who should in fact be regarded as partner nations, must be accorded generous treatment if unity is to be maintained. To ignore them or persecute them would mean that they would develop a sense of permanent frustration. A large minority which has such a deep-seated grudge against the majority would be a danger to the country especially during a time of war and foreign invasion.

There is a school of thought which argues that it is the duty of the minority to fall in line with the wishes of the majority community and march with the latter towards a common goal. Such a policy would however not be quite democratic. It would mean that the minority community will always have to be at the mercy of the majority community. It would then cease to have a mind of its own. It would live in a state of fear and uncertainty. It would not be able to make any positive or constructive contribution towards the social good. In effect it would politically be only half alive. Such a situation would not be in accord-

ance with the best principles of democracy. For one of the fundamental concepts of democracy is that it teaches every man to have the highest conceit of himself. It is true that a minority has certain obligations. It must not make preposterous demands on the majority community. For instance it could not with fairness claim that its language should be imposed on members of the majority community. It cannot with justice demand that its religion be placed in a very privileged position. It would not be correct for it to claim a disproportionate share of the revenue of the country. But it has a right to demand that its language be given equal treatment as the language of the majority. It would be justified in requiring that the state should not outrage its religious sentiments by the enactment of discriminatory or repressive legislation. It would be within its rights in claiming a share of the national revenue for the purpose of developing those areas where it is concentrated especially if such areas are poor in natural resources and are grossly underdeveloped. But the upholders of communal majority rule aver that such assistance could only be conceded at a price. The minority should acquiesce with the views of the majority community. If the latter wish to make its language the state language, the minority should acquiesce and obtain certain concessions for its language. If the majority want a privileged position for its religion, the minority should concede the demand but obtain safeguards for its religion. It is only on this basis of give and take that the majority would be persuaded to consider the just demands of the minority community. So argue the proponents of communal majority rule. Indeed they go further. They put forward the unfair suggestion that the wishes of the communal majority should ultimately prevail. Such an acknowledgement of the unqualified supremacy of the will of the majority community would however be fraught with dangerous consequences. On such a basis there would be no limit to the extent to which a majority based on community or religion might demand that its will should prevail even if

it were to break the hearts of those who belong to the minority communities. If a claim of this nature was conceded, a particular caste in society which formed a majority could impose restrictions on a minority caste which tended to wield an undue amount of economic power in that society. It could go further. It could demand that the majority of posts in the public services should be reserved for the members of its caste irrespective of the meritorious claims of others. It was on such immoral and unethical grounds that Hitler sought to deprive the Jews of their property and privileges in Nazi Germany. The whole civilized world condemned the predatory methods of Hitlerite Germany.

There is therefore little justification for the view that the minority should pay unqualified obeisance to the wishes of a communal majority. The latter might be prepared to grant certain concessions and safeguards. They might even readily grant a charter of fundamental rights. But these safeguards are not adequate in themselves. The majority could always circumvent such statutory safeguards at least by administrative action. The ultimate arbiter in a dispute between the majority and the minority communities would be the judiciary. The latter body however could always be packed by the ruling majority and could therefore be depended to give verdicts which would not embarrass the decisions of the majority community. Nor could acquiescence with the views of the majority and co-operation with it be an adequate safeguard against the danger of incursion into minority rights by the majority. Concessions, it can rightly be argued may be granted merely for the sake of temporising. The minority would be justified in thinking that the ultimate aim of the majority is to destroy it as a separate entity and force it to merge itself with majority community. Such a solution would be ideal for peace and harmony to prevail in a multinational society. But this will be only on the condition that the minority is willing to merge itself with the majo-

rity community. In any case a process of this sort will have to be dragged through a long period of time. The transitional period will be one which will be regarded with fear and apprehension by those sections of the minority who desire to preserve their separate identity. At the same time there might be sections in the majority community too who would not be willing to inter-marry with members of the minority group. The result will be an increasing state of tension in the society concerned. Such a situation will not at all be conducive to the efficient functioning of good government. There is further the probability that a minority which has a distinct culture and civilisation of its own, will not be willing to allow itself to be absorbed by the majority community. In such an event the only alternative for the majority would be to deal generously with the minority community. Failure to accommodate will only result in bitterness and opposition from the minority community. This will necessarily mean the holding up of the social and economic progress of the country. The Government would have to spend its time trying to placate the minority instead of devoting that time to the task of promoting the economic and social betterment of the country.

The experience of Ceylon illustrates many of the difficulties and problems that confront a multi-national society as has been mentioned above. In this country the largest minority community, the Ceylon Tamils had at various times endeavoured to co-operate with the leaders of the majority community in the hope of welding together a united Ceylon. Some of the Ceylon Tamil leaders extended their co-operation to the Right Honourable D. S. Senanayake in his negotiations with the British Government for independence. But recent events have proved that much of this co-operation has been ill-rewarded. The speech of the Leader of the Opposition during the debate stage of the Official Language Bill adds weight to this view.

On that occasion Dr N. M. Perera made the following significant comments :

" In point of fact, if you go back to the history of this country, you will find that the minorities have been betrayed at every possible turn. From the time of Mr D. S. Senanayake, when the Donoughmore Constitution came up, the minorities, particularly the Indian community, were given certain promises which were broken. Then again, when the Soulbury Constitution too came up, similar concessions which were promised were broken right along. In the Indian Immigrants and Emigrants Bill various promises were made over and over again with regard to the treatment to be given to the Indians and everyone of those promises were broken in the implementation of that Bill. In the light of that, are we surprised that the minorities are jibbing at the acceptances of these assurances ".

Co-operation in fact resulted in the imposition of further burdens on the Ceylon Tamil minority. It is therefore no surprise that this minority community now seeks to safeguard its rights by asking for a federal form of constitution.

It is in the nature of things for the minority to be suspicious and mistrustful of the intentions of the majority community. But it is also only proper for the communal majority to understand the fears of the minority and be wise and generous in granting concessions to the latter. There is of course a limit to the granting of such concessions. But any minority by sheer virtue of the fact that it is in a permanent minority will not attempt to make outrageous demands on the majority community. The majority community will not stand to lose in being magnanimous towards the minority community. The fact that the communal majority has a majority in the legislature will in itself be a natural safeguard against any danger to its interests or safety. The cry that the language of the minority will destroy the language of the majority or that

a well entrenched minority religion like Christianity will undermine the faith of the religious majority in this country is a dangerous vote-catching device which the leaders from the majority sector should not raise in the interests of national unity and inter-communal harmony. Responsibility under such circumstances should generally lie with political leaders of the majority community. Communal parties among minority communities will always flourish so long as there is fear and suspicion against the majority community. The way to deal with such situations is not to hurt the minority by imposing undue burdens on it but to allay its fears by attempting to satisfy the demands put forward by its accredited representatives. In this sense communal parties among minority communities serve a useful purpose in that they act as effective spokesmen of their communities. They will make known their views and the majority community will have an opportunity of hearing these views. At the same time political leaders of the majority community should devote their attention to economic and social problems confronting the country instead of wasting their time on parochial and sectional matters. It is a party which is politically bankrupt that attempts to open Pandora's box by raising such communal problems to a political level. It is only on the basis of a generous treatment of minorities and the concentration of attention on national problems that the leaders of the majority community can hope to promote the development of a wholesome democratic atmosphere in any multi-national society.

Democracy after all is not merely the counting of heads. It also means paying adequate consideration to the views of the minority especially if the latter is not merely a political minority. In a homogeneous society the political majority will not be so rash and foolish as to ignore the wishes of the political minority. The former will always have the fear that at some stage it will be replaced. This fear in itself would caution the majority not to proceed on a reckless course of action. In a multi-national society

however, the majority and minority are unchangeable factors and the issues therefore are more complicated. A communal minority whose feelings and susceptibilities have been outraged will have no means of obtaining redress because it can never hope to be a majority. The most that it could do is to place its trust in a national political party which is willing to grant recognition to its demands. But this would leave it with no choice but to support the party which is sympathetic to its claims. The minority might not be in agreement with the economic and social programme of such a party but circumstances may leave it with no option but to support this party. This would be against democratic principles for one of the cardinal tenets of democracy is the freedom to choose. The alternative would be for the minority to place its confidence on a communal party which could be relied on to safeguard its vital interests. Until the communal problem is solved to the satisfaction of the minority community it will refuse to think on any other lines but communal lines. Under these circumstances, it is essential that the political thinking of the majority community should not be coloured by communal considerations. The voters who belong to the majority community will therefore have to possess a great deal of political foresight and understanding. They should endeavour to influence their leaders to join forces with those leaders of the minority community who have the confidence of the minority voters. They should try to persuade their leaders to make an honest effort to meet the demands of the minority leaders. No purpose will be served by subjecting the latter to harsh vituperation and abuse. It is only on the basis of mutual understanding and a policy of give and take that unity and harmony can be established. The alternative is repression bringing in its train the evils of communal hatred and civil chaos. This in turn would engender separatist movements. In the last analysis when all other methods have failed to effect reconciliation and if the majority proves intolerant and recalcitrant, separation would be the only means left for a

territorially integrated minority to enable its members to live as respectable and full citizens of a free society. Northern and Southern Ireland, Palestine, India and Pakistan, North and South Korea, divided Indo-China, the demand for the partition of Cyprus between Greeks and Turks, the movement for a separate South Indian State and the agitation of the Ceylon Tamils for autonomy within the framework of a federal union are all evidence of the extent to which minorities will go when they are driven to desperation and denied the right to equal partnership within the confines of a single state. This at least should serve as a warning to the majority to deal with the minorities in their midst in a generous and judicious manner.

Ancient Tamil Music

K. KODANDAPANI PILLAI

The ancient Tamilians had a system of music of their own which was as old and as refined as that of any of the ancient nations of the world. With the political, economic and cultural changes which came over their life, changes are inevitable in the long life of any ancient people, their music underwent considerable changes with the result it was scarcely possible to recognise its identity. In 1942, one of the patriotic sons of Tamilnad, Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar, a great patron of arts and literature and the illustrious founder of the Annamalai University started a movement for the revival of Tamil music, known as " The Tamil Isai Movement ". This gave a great impetus to the singing of all tunes through the medium of Tamil language and led to research in the field of the ancient Tamil music. This great benefactor who always aimed at thoroughness in all that he did, instituted research to investigate and fix the exact nature of the ancient melodies. Those skilled in these melodies were invited from the distant corners of the country at enormous cost to meet in annual conference to investigate, demonstrate and fix those ancient modes in a scientific manner. These conferences were presided over by the head of the department of music of the Madras University. The proceedings of the conferences were published in Tamil annually.

The mediaeval musical modes or the religious hymns of *Thevaram* and *Thiruvai Mozhi,* which are profuse in their varieties, rich in their content, sweet and moving in their melodies—which still have a special appeal to the people, were taken up first for research in these conferences. Their labour has not reached its end. They have not entered yet into the most ancient Tamil music. But other individuals have not hesitated to take up investigation in this field. In

1947, Swami Vipulananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, a great Tamil Scholar, published his researches after a life long study of that subject, in his monumental work "Yal Nool" யாழ்நூல். Two other books, "Exposition of the musical Modes as found in the Epic Silappathikaram" சிலப்பதிகாரத்திசை நுணுக்கம் by Sangeetha Booshanam S. Ramanathan and the "Pentatone Modes" ஐந்திசைப்பண் by Sundaresan of Kudanthai have also been published. Professor Sambamoorthy, an erudite scholar and a musician well versed in the theory and practice of music, the head of the department of music in the Madras University, has written five volumes about South Indian Music in general. In addition to the references to Tamil music in his work, he has also contributed a treatise on the music described in "The Epic of the Anklet" சிலப்பதிகாரம் which is attached as Appendix III to the translation of that Epic by late V. R. Ramachandra Dikshadar (Professor of History, Madras University). It is now possible to know, with fair certainty, the exact nature and shape of these ancient melodies. It is also now possible to find out their relation to or their contact with the other systems of music in the world and to assess their contribution to the Indian systems of music. A brief and succinct outline of the important aspects of this ancient system of music is now attempted here.

II

Music during the Pre-Christian Era

It is claimed by the ancient commentators, no doubt with adequate reasons, that there were a good many works on the twin arts of dance and music but that all of them have been lost. Some of the important works lost are முதுநாரை, பெருங்குருகு, செயிற்றியம் பேரிசை, சிற்றிசை and இசை நுணுக்கம். The last of the works இசை நுணுக்கம் which means, "The minute scale of Music" or "The Subtleties of Music" by its very name indicates that it should have dealt with the science of music or the minute

and precise divisions of the musical scale. பேரிசை and சிற்றிசை evidently dealt with, as their names suggest, the great modes in music and the lesser modes. As these works are lost, the only source to which we can look for information is the classical works which are generally described as the Literature of the Sangam period.

THOLKAPPIAM AND MUSIC

Among the works of this period *Tolkappiam,* the grand old grammar of the Tamil language, stands foremost. That this is the most ancient of all the classical works is not disputed even by the hostile critic. This great work occupies an unique place as a grammar of a high order and also as a mine of information regarding ancient Tamil civilization and culture. The author of this work was known by the name of this work as Tholkappiar and his real name is not known. The life of the early Tamilians extending, probably, even to the remote period of their tribal life, the customs and manners of those ancient days, the social and political conditions, the physical and geographical particulars could all be gathered from this work. A chapter dealing with these subjects, forms an integral part of this work and is called பொருளதிகாரம் which literally means a chapter of the materials. This is a peculiar feature of this Tamil grammar which is not found in the grammar either of Sanskrit or of any other language. It will be seen from the introduction to this work that the great author collected these particulars not only from the books of his time but also from the people of the good part of the Tamil country between Vengadam [1] in the north and Kumari [2] in the South. The introduction further adds that what was gathered thus was further verified by personal observation and comparison at other places and recorded in this work. [3] Truth and reliability thus form the core of this work.

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1 Modern Tirupathi Hills.

2 Cape Comerin. Some scholars hold that this denotes a place further South which had submerged.

3 வடவேங்கடம் தென்குமரி
ஆயிடைத்

It will be seen from this work that the country was divided into four main regions, pastoral regions (முல்லை Mullai) hills (குறிஞ்சி Kurinchi) Arable lands (மருதம் Marutham) and coastal belts (நெய்தல் Neythal).[4] To this four-fold division was added subsequently one more, "the dreary waste" (பாலை, Palai). These five-fold divisions mark the early divisions of the country. Each region had its own peculiar gods, food, occupations, drums, fauna, flora and music which were classified as Karuporul, (கருப்பொருள்). Karuporul literally means embryonic factors, i.e. the nucleus out of which developed the culture of each region. These seven basic factors greatly influenced the life of the people, shaped the traits and habits peculiar to each region and thus formed the basis of their culture. The classification of music and timbrel, the instrument of rhythm, as basic factors of culture establishes that from early times music and rhythm became intimately connected with the very life of the worship of the Gods. They were held by the people as dear as the worship of their gods and as important as their food. They were resorted to as occupation, trade or industry and became so peculiar to each region as the fauna and flora. These divisions and classifications were not made by Tholkappiar but were in vogue long before his time. In describing the divisions of the land Tholkappiar states that he has described them in order in which they were described before "சொல்லிய முறையாற சொல்லவும் படுமே" (தொல்., அகத்திணை., 5) and about the classification he states that scholars have stated that they were the basic factors "கருவென மொழிய" (தொல்., அகத்திணை.,18).

தமிழ்கூறும் நல் உலகத்து
எழுத்தும் சொல்லும் பொருளும்நாடி
செந்தமிழ் சிவணிய நிலத்தொடு
முந்து நூல்கண்டு முறைபட எண்ணி —*தொல்., பாயிரம், 1—6.*

[4] *முல்லை, குறிஞ்சி, மருதம் நெய்தலெ*ன
சொல்லிய முறையாற் சொல்லறம் படுமே.
—*தொல்., பொருள்., அகத்திணை., 9.*

The term used here to denote music is Yal, யாழ், which in old Tamil meant either the music or the stringed instrument which was used to produce that music Yal, the instrument is now understood to have been somewhat similar to a harp or a lyre. The music or the mode in use in each of these regions was named after the land in which it arose and was generally used, as Mullai முல்லை, Kurinchi குறிஞ்சி, Marutham மருதம், Neythal நெய்தல் or Palai பாலை as the case may be. A harp with a few strings of certain length and arranged in a certain order could produce only a certain type of melody. To produce different types of melodies or modes, harps with strings of different lengths arranged in different order have to be used. These regions had thus five different harps each tuned to that kind of melody or mode which was peculiar to each region. Contrivances to produce any number of melodies on one and the same instrument like the frets in the modern vina were not then in vogue.

Thus these five musical modes were in use from the earliest times. Arising from the national folk songs, this is, evidently, the first stage in which music was given a definite mode and a name to denote it. Sufficient materials do not exist in the Sangam literature available now[5] to fix exactly what the musical scales of these modes were. Naming the modes after the land in which they arise and where they are mostly used, occurs in the infancy of a musical culture. Naming them after the principal note or group of notes in the melody or giving them mathematical, geometrical, religious or mythological names occurs later according to the atmosphere in which the music lives and thrives.

A parallel to this method of naming the melodies is found in the ancient Greek music of the early times. It is

5 There are however materials in the literature of the period immediately following the Sangam period to fix at least one of these modes and these will be discussed later.

a strange coincidence that the early Greeks had also five ancient modes called the Dorain, Lydian, Phrygian, Aeolian and Ionian, named after the lands in which they were invented and mostly used. The following quotation from Dr Charles Bruney will confirm this.

"Pliny tells us that the three first and original modes were the Phrygian, Dorian and Lydian, so named after the several countries[6] in which they were invented and chiefly used, though Heraclides of Pontus asserts that the Aeolian, Dorian and Ionian were of the most ancient and were in general use among the first inhabitants of Greece. However, it seems probable that the five modes mentioned by these two authors were in use long before the rest."[7]

Here also a similar dispute arises that the four modes relating to the four regions of Tholkappiar were the earliest and that பாலை Palai was only a later mode. We may conclude with Dr. Bruney that it is probable that all the five modes mentioned were in use long before the rest. This will be explained further when the musical scales are examined.

These five modes as already pointed out mark the initial stage of the musical development and this relates probably to a time far anterior to the time of Tholkappiar, whatever that may be. There are two references to music in *Tholkappiam* which go to show that the music during the time of the author was far more developed than those ancient modes mentioned above. In the chapter relating to the alphabets the author points out that the vowels and consonants exceed the limit of sound pointed out by him in his grammar and that scholars say that the particulars regarding these are in the "Book of secrets of the strings

[6] The country known as Greece was composed of many small regions each of which developed independently a tradition of its own.

[7] *A General History of Music* by Dr. Charles Bruney, Vol. I, Page 54, 1935 Edition.

tuned to the music".[8] Whether the word used here, மறை "Marai", refers to a book of secrets or the secrets in possession of music experts, the description is indeed artistic and quite significant. This indicates that at the time of the author music has overcome the limitations of an infant who has naturally, no secrets to hide from any one near or dear. It has definitely passed beyond the stage of plain country modes, the common possessions of hill tribes, pastoral shepherds, ploughing farmers or the canoeing fishermen and entered into the intricacies of a musical scale known only to the initiated few.

At another place Tholkappiar uses a simile from the musical practice. He states that an original literary work is likely to be spoiled in its translation, adaptation epitomisation or expansion as a good original melody is likely to be spoiled by an incompetent accompaniment.[9] The accompaniment in music is here denoted by the term வாரம் புணர்த்தல்[10] · (varam punarthal) a term which has become obsolete. The modern reader will understand this better if it is put in the modern garb as பின் பாட்டு (Pin Pattu) or பக்கவாத்தியம்[11] (Pakkavathiam or side music).

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[8] *அளபிறந் திசைத்தலும் ஒற்றிசை நீடலும்*
உளவென மொழிப, இசையொடு சிவணிய
நரம்பின்மறைய என்மனார் புலவர். —*தொல்., எழுத்து, 33.*

[9] *முதல் வழியாயினும் யாப்பினுட் சிதையும்*
வல்லோன் புணரா வாரம்போன்றே. —*தொல்., மரபு , 108.*

[10] *வாரம் என்பதற்குப் பேராசிரியர் உரை :—வாரம் என்பது கூறு; என்னை ! ஒரு பாட்டினைப் பிற்கூறு சொல்வாரை. 'வாரம் பாடும் தோரிய மகளிர்.'* —*சிலப்., 14—155.*

வாங்கிய வாரத்து யாழுங்குழலும்
ஏங்கிய மிடறும் இசைவன கேட்ப. —*சிலப்., 3, 50—51.*

அரும்பத உரை :—இப்படி நிகழ்ந்த உருக்களில் யாழ்ப்பாடலும் குழலிசையும் கண்டப்பாடலும் இயைந்து நடக்கின்றபடி கேட்போர் செவி கொள்ளா நின்று,

[11] To understand the simile one should have some idea of a music concert or a dance or a drama in the South Indian style.—An essential component of any one of these is the accompaniment in music either instrumental or vocal or both, in addition to the accompaniments of

The role of an accompanying songster or musician who should pick up the melody of the chief and follow him up in musical concert, drama or dance is an important one. His job is also not an easy one. He has to get into the mood and emotions of the chief artist if his accompaniment should well harmonise with the original. He has to pick up the subtleties and the artistic turns of the principal in an instant to be in a line with him, or else his accompaniment will be of a different pattern. He should be able to adjust his abilities to suit the chief, to raise them if necessary to catch up with him or lower them to be in tune with him. If he overdoes his part the principal falls into shade and he gets all the applause. If he is not on a par the chief loses the support he needs and his song loses its lustre. If he is bad the entire performance loses its beauty, charm and aesthetic pleasure it is expected to afford. How apt is the simile when it is applied to the translation etc., of an original literary production! It is really surprising how modern is the concept of this simile and how far-reaching its import!

This is not the only surprise Tholkappiar has for the modern reader. Though it may be digressing, let me quote here one more of these surprises which Dr. Sankaran of the Deccan College, Poona, has expressed regarding the work of this ancient author writing about the modern Phonemic theory. Dr. Sankaran says "An insight into this (phonemic) structure is provided by *Tholkappiam,* the oldest Tamil grammar from which a modern student of Phonemics can easily rediscover many a concept that is coming into vogue today. We are lost in wonder that in this old Tamil grammar we rediscover as it were many of our modern ideas.[12] This may not, perhaps, be altogether

rhythm. These accompaniments are gradually losing their ground in the modern drama where the dialogue predominates and the song or the music has been reduced to the lowest minimum. These however still hold their ground in music concerts and dances, probably with some modifications. How little have the musical habits of the Tamilians changed through these thousands of years!!

12 *Phonemics of Old Tamil* by Dr. C. R. Sankaran, M.A., in Deccan College Monographs — Series 7.

irrelevant in the context of music. Phonetics, phonemics and music belong to the sphere of sound. A people proficient in one of these branches may naturally be expected to be equally proficient in the other branches especially when they are almost basically allied or interrelated.

To revert to the simile, its bearing on the music of the period has to be considered now. To coin a simile from the musical practice and to use it to illustrate a truth in literature shows how popular music was with the people of those times. They were evidently so well acquainted with the music as to understand through a musical analogy a truth in literature which was perhaps not so well known in the same level as music. Or this may indicate that music and literary art were so advanced among the people that one proved to be of great assistance in understanding the other or of service to the other when any difficulty was experienced in comprehension or elucidation. Both are fine arts which have many things in common. At any rate this marks not an elementary stage in music and literature. Music has far outgrown its infancy. It has passed even the stage of a truant boyhood setting at naught the discipline and control of the home or the school. It seems to have reached its adolescence well disciplined for a stage or concert seeking discriminate companionship in the selection of a harmonious accompaniment to enhance its beauty, endowed with aesthetic comprehension of unity in diversity and artistic perfection in presenting a combined performance so as to delight the audience.

In addition to the two direct references to music and musical practice *Tholkappiam* refers to four kinds of bards or professional singers who formed an integral part of the then social order. They were called Koothar, கூத்தர், the dancers and dramatists, Panar, பாணர், musicians vocal or instrumental, Porunar, பொருநர், those who sing or play on instruments, martial music and Virali,

விறலி, the lady musicians, dancers and dramatists.[13] These formed the main classes of these bards at the time of Tholkappiar ; but subsequently the 'Panar' among them was further divided into 'Chiru Panar' சிறுபாணர் those who played on harps with minimum number of strings and small in size, and Perumbanar பெரும்பாணர் those who played on harps with greater number of strings and larger in size than the other. Probably harps of different kinds were necessary to suit the different kinds of melodies which each class of these bards specialised in. This subdivision is noticed in the works which arose after *Tholkappiam*. The *Pathu Pattu,* பத்துப்பாட்டு *the Ten Idylls* mentions these different kinds of harps in detail and a few other poems of the Sangam period refer to them also. This subdivision arose evidently as a result of the development in music which took place during the period that intervened between Tholkappiar and the subsequent works, which necessitated the use of two kinds of instruments. As observed previously in those ancient days different kinds of musical modes required different kinds of harps to set them to music.

These bards composed their own songs and put them to music either vocally or on instruments and some of them were called Panuval Panar, பனுவல்பாணர்,[14] literary bards. They went about meeting the patrons of music all over the country. Rulers and chieftains coveted their music and the public delighted in their performances. They were welcome guests in peasant homes and palaces of kings. They were treated almost as guests of honour wherever they stepped in. Kings and chieftains arranged

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[13] கூத்தரும் பாணரும் பொருநரும் விறலியும்
ஆற்றிடைக் காட்சி உறழத் தோன்றிப்
பெற்ற பெருவளம் பெறாஅர்க் கறிவுறீஇச்
சென்று பயனெதிர் சொன்னபக்கமும்.

—தொல்., பொரு., புறத்., 36.

[14] கைகவர் நரம்பிற் பனுவல் பாணன். —நற்றிணை, 200.
பயன்தெரி பனுவல் பைதீர் பாண. —நற்றிணை, 167.

banquets and feasts for them and revelled in their music. The meeting of the two sets of these bards in their itenarary, one imparting to the other, information about the patrons of music, the treatment accorded, the honours conferred and the gifts and presents made, formed a good subject for poetry in those ancient days and Tholkappiar included these as materials found in the literature of his period in his chapter on 'Porul', the material.[15]

Sangam literature furnishes good many instances of these meetings. Of Ten Idylls, the meeting of these bards forms the subject matter of four of them.[16] The poetic conception of these pieces differ according to the attainments of the authors concerned. The description of the country through which these bards passed, the receptions and banquets arranged for them also differ. But all these four poems are one in singing the chorus of the honour and dignity bestowed on these bards by their patrons. It will be useful to gather some particulars about these banquets and the treatment accorded to these bards as they serve to illustrate the meetings of the bards referred to by Tholkappiar.

Of the four Idylls dealing with the meeting of these bards Porunar Artupadai, the meeting of the musicians of the martial modes deals with the reception given by the great monarch Karikalan of the Chola country. The following is the description of this reception :—

> "The bards enter the Palace undetained by the guards. The monarch received them in audience and asks them to take their seats quite close to him. His loveable speech and endearing looks made even the bones of these bards melt with emotion. Beautiful, sweet smiling, well adorned ladies of the palace serve them with drinks (wines) in cups of gold, full to the

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[15] தொல்., பொருள்., புறத்திணை இயல், 36.

[16] சிறுபாண் ஆற்றுப்படை, பெரும்பாண் ஆற்றுப்படை, பொருநர் ஆற்றுப்படை, கூத்தர் ஆற்றுப்படை. (மலைபடுகடாம்)

> brim, as often as they are emptied. The bards drink full and forget the fatigue of their long journey. They are asked to stay in a part of the palace itself "[17]

A banquet for the bards is arranged in the meantime and a joyous feast awaits them.

> " The heralds are ordered to fetch the bards in and the king himself leads them to the banquet. Exquisite soup in which haunches of pure fed sheep had been cooked tender is served and the bards are coaxed to a sumptuous repast. Roasts of fat meat are served hot in plenty even to surfeit. This is followed by delicious sweets of tempting varieties in numerous shapes, which the bards partake and prolong the lunch.*

Dancing accompanied by the music of the harp and the rhythm of the drum முழவு succeed the banquet.

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[17] நசையுநர் தடையா நல் பெருவாயில் 67
இசையோன் புக்கு 68
....
வேளான் வாயில் வேட்பக் கூறிக் 75
கண்ணிற்காண நண்ணுவழி இரீஇப்
பருகுஅன்ன அருகா நோக்கமொடு
உருகுபவைபோல் என்பு குளிர் கொளீஇ, 78
....
மழைஎன மருளும் மகிழ்செய் மாடத்து 84
இழைஅணி வனப்பின் இன்னகை மகளிர்
போக்கில் பொலங்கலம் நிறையப் பல்கால்
வாக்குபு தரத்தர வருத்தம் வீட
ஆரஉண்டு பேரஞர் போக்கி 88
....
திருக்கிளர்கோயில் ஒரு சிறைதங்கி 90

* கதுமெனக் கரைந்து வம்மெனக்கூஉய் 101
துராய்துற்றிய துருவை அம்புழுக்கின்
பாரரை வேவைப் பருகெனத் தண்டி
காழிற் சுட்ட கோழூன் கொழுங்குறை
ஊழின் ஊழின் வாய்வெய்து ஒற்றி
அவை அவை முனிகுவம் எனினே ; சுவைய
வேறு பல் உருவின் விரகுதந்து இரீஇ 108

பொருநர் ஆற்றுப்படை

Feasting and revelry go on for many days in the palace "* [18]

In 'Chirupanartupadai' the chieftain stands near the bards entertained by him attends to them individually and personally helps them to their dishes. He delights in the 'honeyed melodies pouring out ambrosial essence' played to a perfect scale on their harps. The chieftains in the other two Idylls treat the bards with the same honour and dignity. They enjoy the ravishing melodies of their flute or the sweet strains of their harp or the moving tunes of their vocal songs.

The honour and dignity bestowed upon these bards by the highest authorities and the greatest dignitaries of the land almost equal those bestowed on the bards of ancient Greece. Almost in the same manner described in the Tamil classics, the bards of Greece were guests of honour in the palaces of kings and had a distinguished place in the king's table. The lines in which Homer describes the treatment accorded to these bards are so similar that it becomes necessary to quote a few of them.

On the arrival of Telemachus, the King Menalaus of Sparta arranges a banquet in his palace and Homer describes it thus :

" While this gay friendly troop the king surround
With festival and mirth the roofs resound
The bard amid the joyous circle sings
High airs attemper'd to vocal strings." [19]

Odyssey Book iv Verse 21.

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[18]மண்ணமை முழவின் பண்ணமை சீறியாழ் *109*
ஒண்ணுதல் விறலியர் பரணி தூங்க
மகிழ்பதம் பல் நாள் கழிப்பி *111*

பொருநர் ஆற்றுப்படை

* A free translation of these lines is given above to convey the main ideas.

19 தேம்பெய்து *226*

அமிழ்து பொதிந்து இலிற்றும் அடங்குபுரி நரம்பின்
பாடுதுறை முற்றிய பயன்தெரி கேள்விக்
கூடுகொள் இன்னியம் குரல் குரலாக
....

Similarly resound the palaces of kings and chieftains of the Tamil country. Here is another description of a banquet by Ulysses to the bard.

> " For him the goblet flows with wine unmixt "
>
> ....
>
> " The bard a herald guides : The gazing throng
> Pay obeisance as he moves along :
> Beneath the sculptured arch he sits enthroned
> The peers encircling form an awful round
> There from the chine, Ulysses carves with art
> Delicious food an honorary part ;
> This, let the master of the lyre receive,
> A pledge of love ! 'tis all a wretch can give
> Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies
> Who, sacred honours to the bard denies ".
>
> *Odyssey* Book viii

The Tamil country never denied the sacred honours to their bards. What a remarkable similarity exists in the musical customs of these two ancient peoples ! This is evidently a natural outcome of the great fascination which music had for these people and the high esteem in which music was held in both these countries. The respect and regard shown to these bards in these feasts and banquets relate, undoubtedly, to the music and not to the individuals, who especially in the Tamil country were traditionally poor, ill-fed and ill-dressed. *The Ten Idylls* which describe these banquets belonged no doubt to a period later than that of *Tholkappiam* but they definitely relate to a tradition which *Tholkappiam* makes specific mention of in its chapter on Material ' Porul ', which was already referred to and which has, evidently, come down from a period far anterior to that of *Tholkappiam* itself.

நூல் நெறி மரபிற் பண்ணி யானாது, 230
விளங்கு பொற்கலத்தில் விரும்புவனபேணி 244
ஆனாவிருப்பில் தானின்று ஊட்டி 245

சிறுபாண் ஆற்றுப்படை

Tholkappiam further deals with rhythm, சீர், form or colour, வண்ணம், which are common both to poetry and music. It also deals with compositions which are used in common in literature, dance, drama, or music such as kali, கலி, paripadal பரிபாடல், and pannathi, பண்ணத்தி. These will be referred to and dealt with later on, in appropriate context. Various instruments of percussion or rhythm referred to in *Tholkappiam* will be dealt with in a separate section, under the caption 'Musical instruments'. Dance and dancers were referred to briefly before. They will be examined at some length under a separate heading later.

From what has been discussed above we see that music and rhythm formed an integral part of the culture of the Tamilians from time immemorial. Music attained definite forms and shapes as five ancient modes and were given five different names. In addition to these five ancient modes, *Tholkappiam* definitely refers to a musical scale which was not known to many. Concerts and dances went on with suitable accompaniments vocal or instrumental. Kings and nobles held music and dance in high esteem. There was a class of people called *Panar* or bards who specialised in these arts and whose main occupation was music and dance. There was thus a fertile soil and a congenial climate in which the twin arts of music and dance flourished and attained their full growth.

(*To continue*)

The Historicity of Agathiar

S. J. GUNASEGARAM.

There has been a strong and persistent tradition through many centuries that Agathiar, an Aryan Brahmin, was the founder of the Tamil language and the author of its first grammar. This grammar of Agathiar, however, has not come down to posterity, nor has any subsequent grammarian or scholar used it as an authority or given a single quotation from the supposed work of Agathiar.

Tholkappiam, the oldest extant grammar of the Tamil Language, written in or about the fourth century B.C., makes no mention of Agathiar, although the same tradition refers to Tholkappiar, the author of *Tholkappiam,* as having been Agathiar's disciple. It is curious that even Panamparanar, who wrote the preface to *Tholkappiam* has made no reference whatever to Agathiar. If the belief in the authorship of a Tamil grammar written by Agathiar had existed in his time, it is very unlikely that Panamparanar too would have failed to record it.

It is equally striking that the Third Sangam works, the earliest extant literature in Tamil, make no mention of Agathiar. A single reference to the name is found in *Irayanar's Agapporul* which gives the story of the Tamil Sangams but the Agathiar in this instance refers to a constellation and not to a person. (Paripadal 11th poem— நல்லந் துவனார்)

P. T. S. Iyengar has pointed out in his *History of the Tamils,*—p. 224—, that for nearly one thousand years after Christ there is no mention of Agathiar having learnt Tamil from God nor that he was the founder of Tamil. The stories

assigning to Siva the origin of Tamil and to Agathiar, the authorship of the first Tamil grammar, appear to have originated nearly a thousand years after Christ.

Dr. L. D. Barnett was of opinion that the myth of an Aryan Muni called Agathiar who lived at Pothia Hills and composed the earliest Tamil grammar, was cultivated after the North Indian Brahmin had planted his influence firmly in the South ("Cambridge History of India", Vol. I p. 596).

The story appears to have originated actually in the 8th or 9th century A.D. Though in *Manimekalai* (2 A.D.) reference is made to an Agathiar, he is not associated either with the Tamil language or its grammar. (ந. சி. கந்தையா பிள்ளை—அகத்தியர்)

Srinivasa Iyengar (*Tamil Studies*, Appendix II) wrote long ago that, Tholkappiar 'has not said anywhere in his grammar one word about Agastya, his reputed teacher'. It has been at least the Tamil custom for an author to begin his work with a salutation for his teacher or Acharya. In this case the teacher was a divine Rishi and the suppositious writer of the first Tamil grammar. Both of them flourished at the same period. It is not understood why Tholkappiar should have taken so much trouble to observe the usages, to study the Tamil authors and to deduce from them the grammatical rules, or why he should have recited his work for the approval and edification of the Academy before a fellow student — Athanagottasan, while Agastya was its president... But all these throw serious doubts as to whether Agastya had really written a Tamil grammar and whether Tholkappiar was ever his disciple... No man has ever seen Agastya's grammar... What I am inclined to believe is that every myth and tradition connected with Agastya with the Tamil language, should have come into existence subsequent to the seventh or eighth century A.D."

The same author has pointed out elsewhere in the same treatise that 'in the early centuries of the Christian

era the Tamils seem to have held that Tamil was an independent language' and that 'it had nothing to do with Sanskrit'. Tholkappiar himself states in his work that he had consulted earlier grammars and poetical works. Tamil at this period obviously had already a written language and a body of literature. Besides, as Sirinivasa Iyengar has shown 'Sanskrit words in Tamil must have been so few in those days'. Tholkappiar quotes from Tamil works prior to his time and states clearly that special rules were not required to deal with foreign words in Tamil — an indication that at this period the influence of Sanskrit on Tamil was negligible. Sirinivasa Iyengar adds, "It was when they (the Tamils) came under Sanskrit culture (that was subsequent to the seventh or eighth century A.D.) the views of Tamil Scholars began to change. Most of them were acquainted with Tamil and Sanskrit. It was because Sanskrit was used as a vehicle of religious thought during this period, 'a partiality or rather a sentiment connected with religion induced them to trace Tamil from Sanskrit, just as the early European divines tried to trace the Western languages from Hebrew".

This is no doubt a charitable explanation, but whether or not, it was, at the same time, a planned cultural conspiracy on the part of the Aryanised Brahmins to give priority and supremacy to Sanskrit, the language of the civilising Aryans, and to establish an Aryo-Brahmin dominion over Bharata which they had changed into Aryavarta has to be considered. This interference has not been confined to the domain of religion and to that of the courts where Brahmins found places as priests and advisers, but extended even to the Sanskritisation of place names, rivers and mountains.

From the early days of the Aryan incursion with India that there has been a studied attempt on the part of the new-comers to give an Aryan colouring to the indigenous culture, has been noted by many scholars.

"It is an acknowledged fact," says Hewitt in his *Notes on the Early History of Northern India,* p. 216, "that at times the Aryans when naming Dravidian tribes distorted original Dravidian names so as to give an Aryan meaning".

Marshall in his book *A Phrenologist among the Todas* states, "The low state of culture of the Aryans before their incursion into India might have contributed a great deal to their final acceptance of an easy amalgamation with the culture of the Dravidians. It has been suggested long ago that prior to their immigration into India, the Aryans of that era were probably of a similar stage of culture to the Todas".

Tamil gods like Muruga, Tirumal (Mal) were given Aryan names like Subramania and Vishnu. Dravidian names of rivers, and places had been Aryanised. Even the word 'Pandai' (பண்டை), 'old' in Tamil from which the Pandyans derive their name had been changed into Pandavas. (ந. சி. கந்தையாபிள்ளை—'அகத்தியர்')

"That the more brawny but thicker witted Aryan could learn the extraordinarily difficult language of the 'ill spoken man', as the Vedas term the Dravidian, was not to be supposed. The Dravidian instead had to learn Sanskrit".—Slater *Dravidian Element in Indian Culture,* p. 61.

There appears to be some truth in the contention that Dravidian scholars who had gained proficiency in Sanskrit, had translated a large number of Tamil works with Sanskrit works which in course of time came to be regarded as Sanskrit originals. In the book referred to above Slater says, "Indian culture, with its special characteristics of systematic and subtle philosophical thought, must have come from people of originality developing it. That capacity would naturally be exhibited also in the evolution of language, and the purest Dravidian language does exhibit it in the highest degree—in a higher degree than any other Indian language" (*Ibid,* p. 33).

The apostles of this Aryo-Dravidian synthesis were the Brahmins, a priestly caste formed in North India, long after the primitive Indo-Aryans occupied it. These priests in all probability, were of Dravidian origin, who by virtue of their superior knowledge and alleged magical powers attributed to them by the Aryans in the Rig-Veda, became *personae-gratae* among the Aryan ruling classes and, particularly, in the royal households; and at the same time acted as liaison officers between the new comers and the original inhabitants of India. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* itself acknowledges that of the Aryan speakers who were white (*sukla*), brown or tawny (*kapila*) and dark or black (*syama*) and who studied the Vedas, the last was the cleverest of the three, knowing all the three Vedas, while others knew one and two.

The vedic Aryans did not know the art of writing, and the alphabet itself was learnt by them from the Dravidians. The Brahmins of this early age who had gradually acquired an Aryan complex could not have suspected that later generations would laugh at the puerile myth of their making that an Aryan Brahmin had to come down to the highly organised and cultivated countries of the Tamils in the South to teach them their language and to compose the first grammar! The fact would appear to be that it was the Aryan who borrowed, absorbed and gradually transformed the culture of the Dravidians to suit his purpose, and labelled it Indian culture—Aryan.

The widespread Agathiar cult in the countries of South-East Asia is another evidence of this process. These kingdoms were founded, and the countries civilised by immigrants and traders from Southern India. Apart from the prominence given to the Agathia cult, stories of Brahmins founding dynasties have been created. George A. Walker in his *Angkor Empire* makes pointed reference to this when he says, " The sphere of Indian cultural influence has been so strongly imbued with the Brahmin complex

that it is natural to assume that all those who founded dynasties in the Indian colonies were Brahmins ".

In both Funan and Chenla, now known as Cambodia, the founders of the early Indian Dynasties, according to legend, were Brahmins. Of the art of Funan K. A. Nilakanta Sastri himself admits that " The Art of this early Hindu State, judged from the geographical distribution of the monuments and the motifs that satisfy these conditions .... are decidedly of South Indian origin." (pp. 32, 33, *South Indian Influences in the Far East.*) The 'Aryan' Brahmin was averse to the crossing of the seas, and it was the Aryanised Brahmin of the South who was responsible for accompanying South Indian colonists to South East Aryan countries, and spreading the Agathiar cult and creating myths calculated to plant the seeds of Brahminic supremacy in these regions.

K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, the well known champion of Sanskrit culture has made an attempt, in his *History of South India* to cast doubts on the antiquity of the Tamil language and literature and to support the theory that the civilisation of the Tamils was largely due to their association with the Northern Brahmin. He holds that the Aryanisation of South India must have commenced as early as 1000 B.C. Taking into consideration the fact that scholars today are in general agreement in placing 1500 B.C. as the lower limit of the Aryan incursion into India, and that the Aryans were a barbarous nomadic people (at the time of their entry into India), without either a knowledge of the art of writing or a developed religion, it requires a deal of credulity either to approve or to accept that within a period of a couple of hundred years they had become so advanced not merely to be able to develop their own language but to study an admittedly more difficult language like Tamil, and to teach the Tamils their own language and to write its grammar!

Sastri himself admits the difficulty of the land-route to the South, at this early period. The Aryans of this

period had little or no knowledge of the sea, while the Dravidians—the Kalingas, Andhras and the Tamils were highly advanced sea-faring peoples, and had reached considerable fame as navigators and traders. Recent research and scholarship seem to indicate that it must have taken considerable time for the Aryan speaking people to achieve an appreciable degree of culture and refinement and to develop their language. Their cultural progress was assured and promoted mainly by their contact with the more advanced indigenous peoples of India and as a result of the borrowing and absorption of Dravidian culture and ideas.

There is a tradition (*Silappadikaram*) that even during the Mahabharatha war the Tamil kingdoms flourished in the South, and that the armies at Kurukshetra were fed by the Chera King. The Mahabaratha itself refers to the Cheras and the Pandyas of the South, and in particular to the wealth and power of the latter kingdom. There is reference to an Agathiar in the *Ramayana* as well, and the later story that Tholkappiar was a disciple of Agathiar cannot be reconciled with the Agathiar of either of these epics, as Agathiar of the Ramayana and Tholkappiar belong to two different times.

When and how did this legend take shape ? Between the fifth and the seventh centuries of the Christian era, the traditional Tamil kingdoms of the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas came under the sway of the Pallavas, or the Thondayars. The Pallava kings were originally worshippers of Vishnu, and championed Vaishnavism as the court religion and Sanskrit as their court language, though in later years the Pallava kings became converted to Saivism and began to encourage Tamil. It was probably during the early stages of the Pallava ascendancy, in order to reconcile the Tamils to the Northern language, that the court scholars of the period, most of whom were Brahmins, fabricated the Agathiar myths, and began to associate a

venerated name like Agathiar in the South with the origin of Tamil and its grammar. It is significant that it was during this period that the Pallavas extended their influence to the Indian colonies in South-East Asia, as the innumerable Pallava inscriptions and Pallava work of Architecture scattered all over these regions would indicate. The Agathiar cult accordingly was carried across and popularised in South-East Asian Indian colonists as well by the court Brahmins of this period.

It is well known that the Tamil poets of the Sangam period were extremely interested in guarding the purity of their language and resisted the incursion of the language of the northerner into Tamil. Such was their zeal for the preservation of the distinct beauty and composition of their language that the Pallava kings had been more or less ignored by them and very scant reference made to the Pallavas by them in their works. By the time that the Pandyans had regained their power, after the Pallava ascendancy, these stories seem to have taken such a hold that the later Pandyas themselves began to assert that the Agathiar was the founder of the Tamil language and the preceptor of the Pandyan kings, the early patrons of the Tamil Sangam.

Introduction to Tamil Poetry

A. CHIDAMBARANATHA CHETTIAR

Tamil Literature may be said to fall mainly into 6 periods :—

1. Sangam Literature (3rd Sangam Literature)—200 B.C. to 200 A.D.
2. Post-Sangam Literature—200 A.D. to 600 A.D.
3. Early Mediaeval Literature—600 A.D. to 1200 A.D.
4. Later Mediaeval Literature—1200 A.D. to 1800 A.D.
5. Pre-modern Literature—1800 A.D. to 1900 A.D.
6. Modern Literature—1900 A.D. to the present day.

In the first period (200 B.C. to 200 A.D.) poets were true to Nature and their poems abounded in descriptions of natural objects and things, perceived with a keen eye. Some of the ancient descriptions about birds and animals, trees and creepers found in the works of this period accord greatly with what we know of them today after the advent of biological sciences. This speaks for the keen powers of observation and attention to details of the poets of this age. Though prose also should have been composed in this period, such prose compositions have not, however, been handed down to posterity. That there were prose compositions in that period could be inferred from a rule contained in Tholka:ppiam classifying the types of prose compositions into four.

The poetical compositions were all collected as several anthologies. The names of these anthologies are given below ;—

1. Eṭṭutokai.
2. Pattupāṭṭu
3. Padineṇkīlkaṇakku

Eṭṭutokai is the name given to eight big collections. They are :—

1. Naṟṟiṇai
2. Kuṟuntokai
3. Aiṅkuṟunūṟu
4. Kalittokai
5. Akanāṉūṟu
6. Puṟanāṉūṟu
7. Padiṟṟupattu
8. Paripāḍal

Opinion is not unanimous in assigning all the eighteen smaller works (going by the name of Padineṇkīlkaṇakku) to the same age as the preceding two collections. Works such as Nālaḍiyār are found on closer scrutiny to belong to a later age than the second century A.D. Thirukkuṟaḷ, however, is one of the works comprised in Padineṇkīl-kaṇakku which can be placed in a century not later than the second century A.D.

Pattupāṭṭu or Ten Idylls is a collection of 10 long poems of agaval metre. The work consists of the following :—

1. Thirumurukāṟṟupaḍai
2. Ciṟupāṇāṟṟupaḍai
3. Perumpāṇṟṟpaḍai
4. Porunāraṟṟupaḍai
5. Kūttar Āṟṟupaḍai or Malaipaḍukaḍām
6. Mullaipāṭṭu
7. Kuṟinjipāṭṭu
8. Maduraikānji
9. Paṭṭiṉapālai
10. Neḍunalvāḍai

These major poems fall mainly into two categories, namely, those that describe the prowess and valour and generosity of kings and chieftains of those times, and those that describe the domestic life of the people of the time. Of course, there are also poems among these which are praises of the Almighty. However, in the religious poetry like Thirumurukāṟṟupaḍai and Paripāḍal, descriptions of the landscape give a peculiar colour and splendour to the whole work. Puṟanāṉūṟu and Padiṟṟupattu give an account of the ways in which one king fought with another and the ways in which chieftains and warriors took part in the wars of the times and the ways in which messengers

and ambassadors were sent and the ways in which wealthy people made gifts to the learned and the needy. There are plenty of references to the impartial way in which the kings of the time ruled their respective parts of the country. The collections in the Eṭṭutokai series are mainly concerned with courtship, elopement, marriage with or without approval of the parents, wedded life, marital estrangements, reconciliation, happiness and joy. Each one of the poems in these collections looks like a short story in verse form. The terseness with which the incidents have been narrated and the hidden meanings and suggestiveness of words occurring in these poems deserve special notice.

Ārṟupaḍai is a type of poem by which, generally speaking needy persons would be told how they could approach a generous and beneficent lord and how the speaker himself had enjoyed the hospitality of that lord. This type therefore lent itself freely to a narration of the achievements of the king concerned, chieftain or a wealthy person or God. These poems have a special interest for those that want to study the topography of the Tamil country. In every one of these poems the regions of the jungle, mountain, fields and the sea are vividly described, together with the occupations and avocations and pastimes of the different sections of the population inhabiting those regions. Mullaipāṭṭu contains special descriptions of the forest region and gives a masterly and vivid picture of a woman, separated from her lover, bearing the burden of separation with fortitude. Kuṟinjipāṭṭu contains a beautiful description of the region of the hills and is noted for the marvellous way in which it has described the flora of that region. This poem gives an inkling of the traditional way in which a lover makes love to his beloved and gains her. Maduraikānji bears witness to the happy way in which people were spending their life by day and by night in Madurai, the capital city of the Pāṇḍyas. Paṭṭiṉapālai also contains similar descriptions pertaining to

Kāvēri pugum paṭṭiṉam, the capital city of the Cholas. The hero in the poem describes the seat of the capital of the Cholas and says that even if he were to get that capital city he would not allow himself to be separated from his beloved wife. Neḍuṉalvāḍai describes the camp life of a king who, amidst his warriors and generals, walks about in the dead of night praising their valiant deeds of the day and encouraging their further efforts for the morrow.

Among the works comprised in Padineṇkīlkaṇakku, Thirukkuṟaḷ and Nālaḍiyār deserve special mention. These two works have been rendered into English by late Rev. G. U. Pope. There are several other translations of Thirukkural iṇ Eṇglish. Rev. H. A. Popley has brought out the essence of the teachings of Thiruvaḷḷuvar, the author of Thirukkural in a little book. This is a work of great importance as it reflects the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of the Tamil people. This work, though referring to the prevalent thought of other sects living at that time, contains the quintessence of Tamilian thought on conduct in life. Dr. Albert Schweitzer stated that Thirukkuṟaḷ represents a marked degree of progress in the development of Indian or Asiatic thought and that the self-affirmation insisted upon in Thirukkuṟaḷ is contrary to self-negation contemplated in some of the Upanishads. He praised Thiruvaḷḷuvar for putting ethics of action higher than the ethics of inner perfection. The fact that Thiruvaḷḷuvar stressed the importance of being kind to other people and other creatures of the creation, that Thiruvaḷḷuvar enjoined on us that we should bear in mind how other people would react to every one of our actions and that we should learn how to live and how to let others live are enough to vouchsafe an honoured place for him among the great sages of the time.

Nālaḍiyār contains 400 verses in venba metre referring to the general conduct in life for an ascetic and a householder. These verses are said to have been composed by

several Jain saints and there is much influence of Thirukkuṟaḷ noticed in these quadruplets.

The second period—200 A.D. to 600 A.D. is probably a dark period in which either many compositions were not made, or if made, were not preserved. The political state of affairs of the country (the country came under the power of a foreign clan—the Pallavas) and the internecine warfare should be responsible for the paucity of output. At the same time, mention must necessarily be made of the five great Tamil epics, many of which appear to have been composed in this period. The place of honour goes to Cilappadikāram (or the Epic of the anklets) written by Iḷangō Aṭigal. Maṇimēkalai (or the epic of the waistlet), Cīvaka Chintāmaṇi, Vaḷaiyāpathi and Kuṇḍalakēsi are the other four great epics, some of which however were composed still later.

The period 600 to 1200 A.D. may be put down as the period of religious revival, for it is in this age that hosts of compositions on religious themes were composed by the Saiva Saints and Vaishnava Saints. These were preceded by Saint Tirumūlar who was the doyen of the Agamic faith and Siddhars like Korakkar and Sivavākkiār who represent the dissenters of the Vedic faith. It is in this period that the four great Saiva Samayāchāryar (Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Manickavachakar) lived and composed their devotional poems which are noteworthy not only from a philosophical point of view but also from the literary point of view. It is in this period that the twelve great Vaishnava Aḷwārs lived and gave of their best in regard to the hymns to Vishnu. These poems also are worthy of study from both philosophical and literary points of view. A war poem called "Kalingattu Paraṇi" was also composed by Jayaṅkoṇḍar who lived in the time Kulōttuṅga I (11th to 12th century A.D.) and this poem is significant from historical and lyrical points of view. It contains the genealogy of many of the Chola kings, alludes

to their wars and conquests and finally pays a tribute to Karuṇākara Toṇḍaimān, who as the Commandar-in-Chief of Kulōttuṅga's army, defeated the Telugus at the battle of Kaliṅgam. The poem is exquisite in its descriptions of the march, the battle, the victory of the Tamils and the retreat of the defeated Telugus. One can see for oneself how the artist Jayaṅkoṇḍār has used his tools of similies, metaphors, hyperboles, personification etc., in this masterpiece. It is in this period again that Sēkkilār and Kambar, the authors of Periapurāṇam and Kamba Rāmāyaṇam respectively lived. Periapurāṇam mentioning the deeds of 63 Saiva Saints is a Tamil epic which can stand comparison with any other classical poem or epic of other countries. It is not the stories contained in this work that are so remarkable as the way in which they have been told. Again, it is not the matter contained in Kamba Ramayanam that has the foremost appeal but the manner in which the story has been told. Kamban has not translated Ramayanam from the original, but the story of Rama contained in his Ramayanam is a new creation. Kamban was a master-mind who understood the psychology of the characters he was depicting. Oṭṭakūthar, Kālamēkam and other poets of this age have given valuable poems which are worth a study even today.

In the next period (1300 to 1700) appeared Villiputhūr Āḷwār and Aruṇagirināthar, two great exponents of the Vaishnavite and Saivite cults respectively. Their poems have a great appeal to the ear and consequently to the mind and to the heart. They were preceded by a host of eminent writers who expounded the principles of Saivite religion and Vaishnavite religion. It is in this period that Sivagnāṉa Bōtham by Meikaṇḍa Tēvar and Sivagnāna Siddhiār by Umāpathi Sivam, which represent the quintessence of Dravidian religious thought, were given.

Robert de Nobili arrived in Goa round about 1610 A.D. and assumed the name of Tattuva Bōdha Swami and con-

tributed greatly to Tamil Literature by his prose writings. Umaṟu Pulavar, a convert to Islam, composed in this century "Chīrāpurāṇam" an epic depicting the life and adventures of Mahomed the Prophet.

(Thāyumāṉavar composed several psalms in the 18th century A.D. which have received admiration and approbation because of the broadened and cosmopolitan outlook which he had taken. He has shown in his poems how there could be a happy combination and blending of Siddhanta and Vedanta.

Constantius Beschi alias Vīramā Muṉivar arrived at Goa in 1708 A.D. and threw his lot in the midst of the Tamils and composed several catechisms and prose treatises, including the story of Guru Noodle, the simple. He composed also an epic called Tēmpāvaṇi in which the life of St. Joseph has been marvellously told. The Lexicon, entitled "Chatura Akarāthi" which he compiled also marks a milestone in the history of lexicons in Tamil.

Āṟumuga Nāvalar of Jaffna and Rāmalinga Aḍigal of the South Arcot District contributed greatly to the thought of the time and influenced the public in a large measure in the 19th century. Āṟumuga Nāvalar was a prose writer par excellence and Rāmalinga Swāmigal was an inspired writer of devotional poetry of the period. The latter was noted for the simple and unostentatious way in which he approached the general public and his poems were not only for the learned classes but also for the masses. He propounded the view that God comes to the rescue not only of the learned and the cognates but also of the unlearned, down-trodden and uninitiated. Maha Vidwan Mīnakshisundaram Piḷḷai was a prolific writer of the 19th century, and judged by the mere quantity of poetry he has no compeers. He was responsible for giving Sthalapuranam for places which did not enjoy such privileges before.

In the modern period, the foremost star that glitters in the firmament is Subramaṇia Bhārathi, the National Poet

who sang and worked for the political independence of our country. He threw in his lot with the political sufferers of his time and spent 10 years of his precious life (he did not live longer than 40 years of age) in banishment at Pondicherry. It is there that he composed the bulk of his poems which led the people of Tamil Nad to glory and freedom. He wanted to unfetter the Tamil Muse from the shackles of rigid grammar from which she was suffering and consequently wrote poems in a simple and readable Tamil, without caring very much for the cold and rigid rules of prosody and rhetoric. Before his advent, people were prone to judge that poetry which was obscure and unintelligible as the best. Bhārathi was the first to give the death-knell to this kind of attitude and there are today several young and old poets who have followed him in the wake and whose contributions to literature are tending to be great and are promising. Kavimaṇi Dēsikavināyakam Piḷḷai wrote exquisite poetry in a simple way and his poems have a special appeal to children. Nāmakkal Kavignar, Rāmalingam Pillai, who had the honour of being made the Poet Laureate of the Madras State, also contributed greatly by his poems to the onmarch towards freedom. Bhārathidāsan, is a disciple of late Subramanya Bharathi, as is evident by his very name. Sometimes, he out-Herods Herod by his compositions. His poems have a special appeal to those that are anxious about social reforms in our country. He writes about the common man, the tiller of the soil, the hewer of wood and the drawer of water rather than about the wealthy or the powerful. Yogi Suddhānanta Bhāratiar is also widely known as a writer of both poetry and prose. Many of his poems are capable of being set to music. Vānidāsan and Muḍi Arasan are two other budding poets of this time.

Now, I shall give some extracts from poetry representative of the various periods.

The noble ideals for which one lived are mentioned by one of the poets of the third Sangam period (Pēreyiṉ

Muruvalār) whose poem is one of the 400 poems found in the collection entitled "Purananūru". Speaking of a Pandya by name Nambi Neduñcelian who had just died he says, (Pūram, Verse 239)

> "He was wedded to a fine wife. He wore the choicest of flowers. He anointed himself with all pleasant odours. But he utterly destroyed all his enemies. He praised his friends. Because a man was mighty, he never played second fiddle to him. Because a man was meek, he never over-imposed himself on him. Never did he beg of anybody. But never did he decline to give to those in want. Quite renowned was he at the king's court. He faced bravely the armies that came against him and routed the enemies that were retreating. He was skilled in all the four kinds of warfare (the infantry, the elephantry, the charioteers and the horses.) He broke several honey pots for his friends. He sumptuously fed his songsters. Never did he speak a dubious word. Thus did he live, doing all that should be done. So let him be buried or let him be burnt. It does not matter, because he has established his reputation already in this world."

THIRUVALLUVAR has the message that one can either be a householder or an ascetic and yet prosper well and attain bliss. Sometimes, stray verses from Thirukkural are cited to show that Thiruvaḷḷuvar placed the life of an ascetic over and above the life and doings of a man pursuing domestic life. Yet one can cite authority for the other view also as follows :—

For instance, in Kural 48 he says that the householder who, not swerving from virtue, helps the ascetic in his way of life, endures more than those who endure penance. In Kuraḷ 38 he says that he who suffers no day to pass unimproved but (continually) does some good will have by such conduct a great stone by which he can stop the approach of further births.

He has laid stress on the attitude of the heart rather than on the externals of religion. In Kural 34 he says whatever is done with a spotless mind is virtue ; all else is vain show. In another place (in Kural 280) he says that there is no use of a shaven crown or of tangled hair, if one abstains from such deeds as the wise have condemned.

The message of Thiruvalluvar is not pessimistic but optimistic. He has asked us to brave dangers, and to stand four square to all the winds that blow. More than this, he has asked us to be cheerful under adverse circumstances. (see for instance Kural 621—If troubles come, simply laugh ; there is nothing like laughter which can overcome sorrow). In another place, he pities people who cannot be cheerful at all. In Kural 99 he says, " To those who cannot rejoice, the wide world is buried in darkness even in broad daylight ". One of the ways in which one can be cheerful is to avoid wrath. He asks in Kural 294, " Is there a greater enemy than anger, which kills both laughter and joy ? " Sometimes, Thiruvalluvar is looked upon as having underlined the inexorable nature of fate. Though in a chapter (Chap. 38) he has stressed the importance of fate and though in the concluding couplet of that chapter he has asked " What is stronger than fate ? If we think of an expedient to avert it, it will appear through that expedient itself ", in other places he has held up the free will of man (as in Chap. 62 on manly effort), where in the concluding couplet he says, " they who strive hard without fatigue or desperation or delay will vanquish fate and throw it out. " In four chapters, especially, (Chapters 60 to 63), entitled " On Energy, Against Idleness, On Manly Effort, On Perseverence in spite of difficulties " he has laid the greatest emphasis possible on the free will of man and has removed the misconception that man is God's sport and that all his doings have been pre-ordained or pre-determined. Thiruvalluvar has stressed the importance of good conduct in life. His Chapter on propriety of conduct (Chap. 14) is well worth a complete study.

Kalittokai contains fine lyrical poems on love. At the same time, they present to us high ideals in life and satisfy the condition that true poetry must have high seriousness. In poem No. 10, the maid of a lady-in-love, while describing the desert region through which the lover has to pass, states that the desert is full of dry, leafless, tall trees. In this connection, the similies used by her are worthy of consideration. Even as a poor man, though young, cannot enjoy happiness and consequently becomes despondent, the branches of the trees have withered. Just as the wealth of a narrow minded miser is useless to others, the shade of the tree is absolutely useless to those that might resort to the tree for any shelter. Even as a man who has been rude to others has consequently suffered in reputation, the roots of the tree are affected by the rudeness of the blazing sun. Just as the shelter given by the ruler of a kingdom who persecutes and tortures his subjects due to greed of money is useless, the shade given by the tall withered trees is absolutely useless.

In another verse, the trees which blossom forth finely and fully are compared to the wealth of a tireless persevering man (poem 35).

In yet another poem (No. 125) people who do surreptitious things apparently because of their notion that no one sees them at the time, are required to remember that after all they cannot escape the prickings of their conscience. This also occurs in the words addressed by a maid to the lover of her beloved friend.

This work abounds in romantic scenes. A lover finds his beloved lass on her way home after milking cows and accosts her. In this way a poem commences (No. 116). The lass asks him why he stands across her path, takes hold of her calf and prevents her from going. She appeals to him to leave her. He asks her not to be angry at the moment. She tells him that if her mother saw him thus worrying her she would pounce upon him just as a cow would pounce

upon a person who touches the new-born calf. And he tells her " I do not mind whether your mother comes or your father comes or others come. If only you will have mercy on me I will remain unaffected. She speaks further as follows :—

" You do not pay heed to my words but insist on saying that you want me and bandy word for word with me. Unabashed, you are coming to the place where I go with the milking bowl ". In this way, the girl is supposed to have indicated the place for their secret meeting.

Another girl had been in love with a teen-aged boy. They had met before but have not been married yet. She describes her dream in one of the poems (No. 128). She met him and asked why he had given her up contrary to the promise held out by him before. And he touched her and said that he would never thereafter be separated from her. She asked him with tears how he had forgotten the pleasures of her bedside and he replied, " O, how is it that you have become caged and confined like the pea-hen ? " So saying he fell at her feet. Taking the flower garland from her head, she beat him with it as though she were beating him with a stick, and he trembled and asked " What wrong have I done to deserve this ? Are'nt you a fool ? This dream she narrates to her maid and says that because she has dreamt thus, her beloved friend is sure to come back. In this hope, she says that she is alive.

In another poem (No. 110) which is in the nature of a dialogue between the lover and his beloved of the forest region the similies used are significant. The girl says, " I allowed you to touch me but you want to embrace me. And you think that the woman who gives her cup of buttermilk out of charity also will give butter for the mere asking ? He replies " Just as the rope in the churning stick goes to and fro, my mind, despite my efforts, is in the process of going to you, returning to me and again going back to you. Just as the cow, even during day time does not

want to stir out of the stable out of love and concern for the new-born calf, my mind would never go away from here leaving you. You have taken away my life and spirit with you, just as butter has been removed from the milk after churning. How can I live without you ?" She replies, "What a pity ! You dare tell me things such as that without me you wouldn't live. Don't you see that my relatives are there ? Go, I will pass along this side tomorrow also for grazing of the calf". The idea is that she has given him hope of meeting on the morrow.

The author of *Cilappadikāram* was Iḷankō Aṭikaḷ, the younger brother of Chenkuṭṭuvan, the Chēra King. He had renounced the world in order that the words uttered by an astrologer that he would become king might not come true. He thought that if he were to become king it would be to the detriment of his elder brother. He was of such a lovable and selfless disposition. He lived the life of an ascetic and years later composed this epic.

Iḷankō must have had before him a crude outline of the story of Kōvalan̲'s life. He has raised the story to the epic level by incorporating into the work supernatural events which, however, are made to appear probable. Such, for instance, are the words addressed to the Sun-God by Kaṇṇaki and his answer proclaiming from the heavens that her husband was not a thief.

> Pāytirai vēlip paduporul nīariythi
> Kāyakatirc celvanē kalvanō enkaṇavan ?

asked Kaṇṇaki, and straight came the reply

> Kalvanō allan karunkayarkaṇ mātarāy
> Olleri unnum ivvūr.

A poet thinks of acts and events greater and more historical than a historian can record.

Kaṇṇaki, the heroine represents the type of Tamil womanhood which assumes heroic stature when wronged.

The very sight of her in the court of the king, forlorn, dismayed and furious was enough to strike a note of terror into the hearts of the king and his men. That scene truly evokes pity and fear. Her innocent husband had been murdered without proper enquiry. She knew that her husband had not stolen the anklets of the queen ; she knew that by mistaking her own anklets for the queen's he had been killed. She could not rest until she proved that her husband was not guilty. Her strength was the strength of hundred as she was pure. Hence when she appeared before the king she spoke in a reproachful language :

> Tērā mannā ceppuvatudaiyēn ;
> Narriram padarā korkai vāntē !

When the Pāṇḍyan king asked her who she was and what business brought her there, her reply was given in such a manner as to give us the impression that she knew the procedure of the court. She began by describing the place of her origin, mentioned the names of her husband and his father and gave out her own name. She said to him, ' My husband came to your city with a view to setting up a business, O ! valiant king ! He came here to sell the ornament worn by me at the ankle but alas ! he has been killed ". These words are replete with significance. They imply that she and her husband had passed through several forests where wild beasts roam and that they who had emerged safe through the thick woods and deserts had suffered injury in a city inhabited by human beings and ruled over by the Pandyan king. They imply further that a king who was responsible for killing a guiltless person cannot be deemed valiant and that after all it was for the ornament of her foot (and not the head) that Kōvalaṉ her husband had been the victim.

The moment she proved with the aid of her matching anklet that her husband was not the thief the Pandya king repented and fell down dead. The language in which this is couched is remarkable for its poetic beauty :—

Tālnta kudaiyan Talarnta cenkōlan
Poncey kollan tancor kētta
Yānō arasan yānē kalvan
Manpatai kākkum Tenpulam kāval
Enmutal pilaittatu keduka en āyulena
Mannavan mayanki vīlntananē.

As soon as the king saw the diamond spurting from the broken anklet, he became conscious of his mistake and regarded him as one who was no longer fit to rule the land, as one who has failed to give succour to the helpless, as one whose sceptre has weakened. He exclaimed "Am I a king ? No, I am the thief. The pride with which we, the Pandyas, have been guarding all the creatures against evil is gone, gone with me ! Let me die ! " This is but my imperfect rendering in English of a portion of the Tamil original.

MĀNICKAVĀCHAKAR, in one of his devotional lyrics speaks to his mind accosting it as a mind comparable to a corpse. He says further, "O! Guideless Mind ! You do not dance, nor do you sing of the Lord of cosmic Dance. You have no love for Him. Should you not sing with great fervour ? Are you not worried with the burden of your sins ? You don't bow ! You don't cherish the Feet of the Lord ! Nor do you offer flowers at the Feet of the Lord ! You never seek Him ! You don't roam about the streets in search of Him. I wonder what to do ! " (poem 35).

In another verse, he compares himself to Yama, the Destroyer who after coming into conflict with the Lord actually surrendered himself and gained His Feet (while capturing the life of Markandeya). That is to say, Manickavachakar alluded to the time when he had not completely done devotional and pious deeds and yet was hoping to receive the grace of God by occasionally offending Him. He appeals to God in another verse (No. 54) to shower His grace on him in the following manner :—

" All-knowing Lord ! Nectar ! Do you take me, this slave, into you fold because I am learned ? When you

showered your bliss on me, did you not see that I was ignorant ? O ! God ! whether I am a learned man or not, give me your grace." In another verse (No. 98) of Thiruchathakam, he points out the totally undeserving nature of man to receive heavenly bliss and the sweet, condescending attitude of the Almighty who was anxious to bestow it on man. He says, " I have no enduring love of you, O ! Sweet Lord ! You have made me, however, a disciple of yours by the skill with which you can make fine fruits of hard stones. There is no bound to your gracefulness. Whatever I might do or whatever I might take, O ! Lord, I beseech you to bless me and to show me your feet. In another place (verse No. 407) he implores the Lord to forgive his sins and to rescue him. He says thus :—" O ! Lord, who has conquered the foes and subdued them and made even an ornament of them ! O ! Lord ! who, out of grace, has taken the burden of bearing the Ganga on your head ! When I do abhorrent things out of my nature to err, you will, out of your generosity, forgive me. By your grace, let there be no more birth for me. I am your slave. I will surrender myself."

In yet another place (verse No. 94) Māṇickavāchakar is hopeful that if he wept bitterly he would obtain God's grace. He speaks, " I am a phantom ; my heart is nothing ; my love is false. Yet, wicked as I am, if I pray and weep I can attain you. O ! Sweet Lord, Sweet as hoṇey, Sweet as Nectar and Sweet as sugar-crush. O ! Almighty ! Tell me how I can attain you and bless me !"

KULASEKARA ĀLWĀR in his devotional songs addressed to the Lord Vishnu (Perumāl Thirumozhi—5th decade) makes a fervent appeal for obtaining His grace pointing out his own helplessness if God does not come to his rescue. He says, " There is no succour but your own Feet, O ! Lord of Vittuvakōḍu. If you do not destroy my distress where else can I find shelter ? Even if the tender child's own mother casts it aside out of great wrath, the

child looks up to her for being restored to her favour. Likewise, even if you frown on me I will hold you dear ".

" Even if the surgeon uses his surgical tools, the patient looks up to him with love for the curing of the disease. Likewise, even if you try me with tribulations and troubles I will only look up to you for your kind grace ".

' O ! Lord of Vittuvakōḍu, where can I find refuge except at your sacred Feet ? After straying in all directions over the ocean just as a bird comes back to the mast of the ship for perching, wherever I might wander I shall be coming back to you, beseeching your kind grace. "

That KAMBAR has understood the psychology of the characters he was portraying can be borne out by one of the padalams in Ayōdhya Kāndam (Kaikēyi Cūlvinai paḍalam). Here according to the story, Kaikēyi reminding Dasarathan of his two old boons persuades him to send away to the forest his dear son, Rama by one of those boons and gets the kingdom for her own son, Bharathan by the other. The art with which this incident is narrated is worthy of admiration. Kaikēyi is represented as having been determined in her mind about the two boons she was pressing. Though Dasarathan voluntarily granted those boons at an earlier time when she had assisted him in one of his wars by charioteering for his sake and though now on being reminded he has willingly agreed to grant them, when he was told about the two actual boons required of him, he hesitated. He tried to persuade her not to be stubborn in regard to her pound of flesh. When persuasion failed he was about to be aggressive. He fretted and fumed and said that he would kill all women because they might be as cruel as his own wife. For sometime, he vascillated between keeping the word and deviating from it. He says, " How cruel is Duty ! Will not truth die ? " So saying he falls down. All this is because of his inordinate love for his first and dear son, Rama. So, now he tries to escape from the promise. He falls at the feet of Kaikēyi and im-

plores her to withdraw her second request, namely that Rama should go to the forest. But Kaikēyi is firm and reminds him of his honour of keeping up his word. She reminds him of the line of kings (to which he belongs) who were all anxious to keep up their honour in their own days. Dasarathan̲ had desired that Rama should become king. He had made that announcement in the open court. What is to come of that word ? He feels frustrated and thwarted. There ensues a conflict in his mind regarding the line of action he is to choose. He becomes angry and hates Kaikēyi who thwarts him. He tries to place the blame for the thwarting on persons who are not responsible for this situation at all. He has now to choose between moral and less moral modes of conduct. Ultimately, he prefers the remote goal to the nearer goal. After a period of conflict, indecision, vascillation and struggle within himself he decides to keep his word. The choice is due to his character and will power. He therefore wills to do that which he does not want to do. Thus it is that he ultimately agrees to sending away Rama to the forest. Already he has granted the other boon, namely, that Bharatha should rule the kingdom. It is marvellous to find that Kamban has applied these processes in the delineation of the character of Dasarathan̲.

SUBRAMANIA BHARATHI pleaded for the emancipation of women, who out of false notions which developed in mediaeval society were put down as chattels or slaves. In one of his poems on womanhood he says, " Let us dance saying let womanhood flourish ; let us dance saying let womanhood conquer ". The terms Mother and Wife invoke in us a tenderness, happiness and joy.

" Let us dance peacefully saying let love live long ; let us clap our hands and bless real love ; we can be free from distress only because of womanhood ; Is not woman mother of mighty heroes ? The suckling child imbibes strength from Mother ; the wife's words bring honour to

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man ; women's duties drive away destruction ; let us clasp our hands and merrily dance ".

" Let us raise our shoulders and dance saying ' obeisance to Mother ' ; let us praise the loving doves ; at the behest of a woman of the fine waist we will pull asunder hundreds of hills ".

" Let our cymbals ring with the note ' obeisance to Mother ' ; let our flutes play the note ' Bowing to Mother ' ; at the behest of the loving women of charming eyes we will soar above the winds and offer threat to the heavens. "

In another place (Bharathi Sixty-Six) he again puts in a strong plea for the upliftment of women. He asks, " If we want to subdue our own wives, should we enslave the entire other sex ? Should we not regard our Mother who begot us and brought us up as a real Goddess ? O ! unkind friends ? "

Bharathi's poems are noteworthy because of the spirit of courage which they instil into the people. In his famous poem entitled " No Fear ", he starts saying " No Fear, No Fear, there is absolutely No Fear. Even if the whole world marches against us, no fear, no fear, there is absolutely no fear ; Even if the world slanders us treating us lightly, no fear, no fear, there is absolutely no fear. Even if we are reduced to begging alms, no fear, no fear, there is absolutely no fear. Even if all our dear friends are lost, no fear, no fear, there is absolutely no fear ".

" Even when lovely ladies send their ogling glances, no fear, no fear, there is absolutely no fear. Even when loving friends bring poison and feed no fear, no fear, there is absolutely no fear.

" Even when bloody spears are hurled against us, no fear, no fear, there is absolutely no fear. Even when the heavens crash and fall on our heads, no fear, no fear, there is absolutely no fear ".

I will now briefly allude to a folk song composed by Bhārathi Dāsan in order to show how dexterously he puts modern ideas into the mouths of his speakers. He sings, " Brother, there is no caste ; there is no man who is high nor low ; look at our Thirukkural which has come to remove our moss ; brother, justice is the same to all, to all those who live in this broad world. Justice is the same to woman and to man. "

" Dear brother, your discerning knowledge is but the green light signal for you ; with that green light you must seek the proper path. Brother, there is no fear, if you are on the right path. Beware of hypocrisy ! beware ! beware ! "

These are but a few representative specimens intended to introduce Tamil poetry to the readers.

Worship in Spirit and Truth

(The following translation of a verse of Tāimānavar by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan is to be found in *the Stratford Anthology of Favourite Quotations of Eminent Men and Women*, compiled by Ronald Petrie, (George G. Harrap, p. 176).

அங்கிங் கெனுதபடி யெங்கும்ப்ர காசமா
    யானந்த பூர்த்தியாகி
அருளொடு நிறைந்ததெது தன்னருள் வெளிக்குளே
    யகிலாண்ட கோடியெல்லாம்
தங்கும் படிக்கிச்சை வைத்துயிர்க் குயிராய்த்
    தழைத்ததெது மனவாக்கினில்
தட்டாம னின்றதெது சமயகோ டிகளெலாந்
    தந்தெய்வ மெந்தெய்வமென்
றெங்குந் தொடர்ந்தெதிர் வழக்கிடவு நின்றதெது
    வெங்கணும் பெருவழக்காய்
யாதினும் வல்லவொரு சித்தாகி யின்பமா
    யென்றைக்கு முள்ளதெதுமேல்
கங்குல்பக லறநின்ற வெல்லையுள தெதுவது
    கருத்திற் கிசைந்த‌ததுவே
கண்டன வெலாமோன வுருவெளிய தாகவுங்
    கருதியஞ் சலிசெய்குவாம்.

What is That which of Grace is full, which is neither here nor there only, but is everywhere as the Fullness of Peace ?

What is That which, willing myriads of worlds to float in the expanse of Its Grace, is the Life of all things living ?

What is That which the mind cannot grasp and speech cannot define ?

What is That which exists impartially, while countless Creeds in every land claim It, each as its own ?

Amid such contending claims, what is That which endlessly is Knowledge, Love and Power ?

What is That whose bourne is without day or night ?

That indeed is soul-satisfying !

That let us worship, deeming all things visible as Phenomena in the expanse of the Silent Spirit.

Official Language of the Indian Union

Proceedings of the Union Language Convention of South India

A big convention of prominent public men of South India today made a unanimous demand that English should continue as the official language of the Indian Union. The Convention also wanted that the Constitution should be amended to achieve this purpose.

A Seven-man Committee of Action with Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. M. Ruthnaswami, Messrs. P. Kodanda Rao, P. T. Rajan, A. Subbiah and S. Chellaswami was appointed to get the demand of the Convention accepted by the Government of India.

The large gathering of politicians, businessmen and educationists, heard for over three hours at the Srinivasa Sastri Hall, Mr. Mirza Ismail, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Rajaji and others advance forcible arguments in favour of their demand that the Central Government should give up its proposal to adopt Hindi as the official language.

"English Ever, Hindi Never"—a slogan coined by Mr. P. Kodanda Rao for the Convention—formed the central theme of the speeches.

Mr. Mirza Ismail, in an outspoken speech, declared emphatically that Hindi was not and would never become a "truly" national language in the sense that a language was national in its own right, historic process and natural acceptance. Imposition of such a language, which was essentially alien to large numbers of people, would mar a sense of oneness.

Dr. Ramaswami Iyer, making generous use of his experiences during his world travels and citing instances of other countries

asserted that English should be there if they desired advancement politically, scientifically and culturally.

Dr. Ramaswami Iyer, who was repeatedly cheered by the gathering, quoted the constitutional provision on Hindi itself against the present " official language " policy of the Government of India.

C. R.'s Call to State Government

Rajaji, who has been spearheading the movement against replacement of English, sounded a note of warning to the State Government that the battle against Hindi would be lost, if they accepted Hindi alongside English. No battle was won by following the path of least resistance, Rajaji said.

He added : " Our Government has followed the line of least resistance. It may solve the immediate problem of friction but it would never solve the problem of understanding. It was not good to compromise and the State's suggestion would bring in lot of difficulties later on."

Equally stern was Rajaji's warning to people " up in the North " against their attempts to force Hindi in the name of patriotism. Rajaji would never believe that they were motivated by a desire to dominate but even if they had that desire, they would be well advised to leave the *status quo* to continue.

A message from Dr. M. R. Jayakar expressed complete agreement with the views of the Convention. The message received from the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs and others were read by Mr. S. Chellaswami.

Big Crowd

Admission to the Convention was confined to delegates and to invitees only. But the importance of the subject and the rare combination of personalities participating in the convention drew a sizable crowd of youthful intellects ouside who for a while raised loud protestations against being kept out. The Sastry Hall proved too inadequate for the purpose and the crowd had to be pacified by some being allowed to squeeze themselves into the already crowded hall and others being provided on the ground floor. Loud speaker arrangement was made even outside.

Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in the course of his speech pleaded for driving away unnecessary issues from consideration. The issue now was about the official language and not about the national language and considering the question from that standpoint, there was hardly any room for importing sentiment or emotion. They had to consider the question of language as an instrument of administration for official and political work, from a purely utilitarian point of view. The question really was whether or not the use of English as official language facilitated administration and whether substitution of any other Indian language would be more useful than English as an instrument of administration.

Mr. Ruthnaswamy pointed out that one of the arguments used by the Official Language Commission for substitution of Hindi for English was that the country's administration was now being carried on in a language which was not understood by 90 per cent of the people. One might ask a counter question whether the administration of a country could be carried on by a people, 80 per cent of whom were illiterate. Among the Hindi-speaking people only 20 per cent were literates and in the non-Hindi areas not even 5 or 10 per cent were literate in Hindi. He added that English language, however much one might dislike it being a foreign language, had introduced certain traditions and conventions of administrative work. Till the middle of 18th century, Latin was used as a language of official documents in the west and French was used as a language in diplomatic documents. None of those people rejected the utility of those languages as being something alien to them.

Madras Government's Decision

Then there was the question raised by the decision of the Madras Government to have English and Hindi as the languages of administration. One need only imagine the complications, the running of these two languages in parallel lines would lead to. One of the chronic evils of Indian administration was delay and there would be further delay in getting the correspondence translated from one language to the other and registering and re-registering them.

He also expressed the fear that the Gresham's law of inferior coins driving out the superior ones might operate here also. He asked whether this equalisation of Hindi with English as against the

regional languages, would not strengthen the cry of Northern domination.

" Having posed these questions I will leave the discussion of the matter to the meeting," he said and thanked the organisers for giving him the honour of being the Chairman of the Reception Committee. He requested Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer to take the chair.

Inaugurating the Convention, Mr. Mirza Ismail said they had assembled there to express their most emphatic opposition to the attempts being made to impose Hindi upon the country as official language of the Union. In that they were performing " a sacred duty, not to sectional interests but to our motherland."

" We recognise the sincerity and excellence of the motives which has inspired the proposal—the desire to foster a consciousness of unity in the country. Undoubtedly that effect would be produced by the possession of a truly national language—one that is national in its own right by historic process and natural acceptance.

" But Hindi is not, nor I think can it ever become, such a language. (applause). It is the language of a section, though a large one, of our people. Its cultivation in other areas is laudable enough but purely artificial (laughter). We can never be brought to a sense of oneness by the imposition of something essentially alien to so many."

Mr. Mirza Ismail added that in fact this attempt at imposition of Hindi was having precisely the effect opposite to that intended. It was not promoting unity, but emphasising and increasing disunity and creating deep antagonism.

In a country where there was so much division, of one kind or another, the statesman's unifying task was of extraordinary difficulty and delicacy. Differences must be recognised, as necessarily affecting the whole, and occasions of deep antagonism must be avoided.

He thought it was a mistake to call it ' Hindi ' instead of Hindusthani. The Hindi that was broadcast daily by the All-India Radio at present was an " undeveloped, stilted language and highly Sanskritised, rendering it unattractive and unintelligible, to many. We, therefore, earnestly appeal to our fellow countrymen in the North

to pause, reflect and abandon a policy fraught with danger to the unity and stability of the country.

"In these days of Government by publicity and persuasion, there are certain problems which we should do well to leave to time to solve for us. This language question is one such. Let us give time a chance. A solution effected by time is generally found to be the most enduring and the most satisfactory. Let us wait, just wait," he said and added that meanwhile English should continue to be the official language of the Union Government and be allowed to play its useful part as a unifying and cementing force.

English had served them splendidly so far, he said, and they might be sure this service would continue provided they did not so shape their educational policy as to deprive themselves of this tried and effective instrument.

No one, of course, was pretending that English was that national language which Hindi failed to be. But it was, for these official purposes and for other essential purposes, too, a common language, and that was what they needed. And apart from that, any such weakening of their English heritage, as would inevitably result from the proposed change, would be a most grievous misfortune. "We have in India outward and inward riches of our own, but isolation—commercial, cultural, political, social—would actually diminish these, while depriving us of so much else.

"To us, who are met here, it is clear that this Hindi project means two deadly things—first the sharpening and continuance of antagonisms in India, and second, isolation, the rejection of our place in the World".

Concluding Mr. Ismail said that among the organizers of the Convention were men whose eminence as all-India patriots and as statesmen having insight into the life and needs of the country was universally acknowledged. "It was good that they were thus speaking out their mind and I trust that those in authority will heed their counsel. I wish every success to this Convention and the cause it stands for."

C. P.'s Address

Delivering the presidential address, Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer characterised the occasion as momentous and fateful, which called

for plain speaking (Laughter). He prefaced his observations by insisting that he had no personal prejudice against Hindi whatsoever. It was he who inaugurated the first Hindi Prachar Sabha in Madras some 40 years ago. More recently he had laid the foundation stone to a building devoted to the cultivation of Hindi in Ootacamund, which he had made his second home. He did so because it was a language which was spoken by a large number of persons and served as a passport to travel outside the limits of Madras in this country just as a knowledge of German, French or Spanish became necessary while travelling abroad. " So, likewise in this country, if you travel outside Tamilnad, you must know something of that language which is called Hindi. I deliberately use that expression " (Laughter).

Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer went on to explain how the language was evolved during the days of the Moghul emperors. They set up military camps in various places, in Agra, Delhi, Punjab, Muzaffarpur and Dacca and the soldiers, who had come from various parts of India and lived in those camps, 'manufactured' for their purposes a language out of Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, a little of the local dialect and so forth. Now, Hindi was more or less of that type (Laughter).

Directive in Constitution

Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer then observed that more often it happened that legislators enacting statutes sometimes uttered words of wisdom which they were not themselves fully apprehensive of. Article 351 of the Constitution made it clear that Hindi was a language " which is not made, but is in the making." It was still growing and was expected to grow and it was not a language which could be said to be a language in the sense that Sanskrit or Latin, Greek, English, French, Persian or Arabic were. Article 351 was a special directive which had no statutory force and on which one could not go to a Court. " It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India....".

Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer drew pointed attention to the words " composite culture " which meant the Dravidian culture, North Indian, Assamese and Punjabi culture. First it ought to combine

the essential outward aspects of these cultures and then attempts should be made " to secure its enrichment."—It was still rather poor (Laughter) — " by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages." That was the Hindi language. It was only then that they could discuss this question of making it an official language, quietly, dispassionately and sensibly and not until then—not until Directive 351 was satisfied.

DIFFERENT HINDIS

Turning to another aspect, Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer said he himself knew Hindi. Mr. Rajagopalachariar knew Hindi. Hindi as spoken by Mr. Abul Kalam Azad could not be understood either by C. R. or by himself. Whereas Mr. Azad was importing into Hindi more Persian expressions, C. R. and himself approached it with a background of their Sanskrit knowledge, " thus enriching its composite culture " (Laughter).

Then there were other people also who spoke Hindi. What took place in Parliament on November 18 was an example. Mr. Amul Chand put a number of supplementaries and the Deputy Minister, Mrs. Lakshmi Menon said she could not understand the question. The Prime Minister, who intervened, also said that he himself had not understood what the member was saying, but nevertheless " was prepared to give the answer " (Laughter). In other words, he and C. R. could not know Azad's Hindi and Prime Minister and Mrs. Lakshmi Menon could not understand Amul Chand's Hindi. It was also his experience at the Benares University that students from Bihar were not properly understood by students of U.P. Now, Tulsidas's particular dialect called Vraja Basha, was a language presumably spoken by some of the Yadavas. Surdas wrote in a somewhat different dialect. Vraja Basha was not the spoken Hindi in Delhi. It might be seen that unlike Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese or Malayalam, which were perfect and stabilised, Hindi lacked a definite vocabulary, syntax and grammar.

Dealing with the question of Hindi being made the official language, Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer referred to Art. 344 (3) of the Constitution, which laid a directive to the Language Commission

that in making their recommendations, the Commission shall have due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India, and the just claims and the interests of persons belonging to the non-Hindi speaking areas in regard to the public services. The main object of this gathering, he said, would be to insist upon a full appraisal and investigation of the root meaning of this article and sub-article. Did the proposal now put forward before the country serve the industrial, cultural, and scientific advancement of India? Did it meet the just claims and interests of the non-Hindi speaking people? The answer to these questions was an emphatic 'No.'

Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer added that nobody could say that resurgent China of today was very friendly either to the U.S. or to England, both of which were English-speaking. Just a few weeks ago that country had perfected a law, which was in the making when he visited these a year ago, to substitute Latin alphabets for their own ideographical alphabets. China was giving up its most appreciated art of ideographic writing for the purpose of bringing unity in the world and making China more effective and international instrument as harbinger of culture and as one of the progenitors of industrial and communistic policy.

Again, Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer added, it would be found that in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia, English had been made compulsory in all elementary schools. Why, he asked. Because it was a mode of convenient expression. Until the 18th century nobody in Europe read books in English. Bacon wrote his book in Latin so that it might be read in the world. The Dutch philosopher, Sporttem, did not write either in Dutch, French or German, but in Latin. Frederic the Great of Germany, one of the potent forces in the 18th century, invited Voltaire to improve the German language with his French culture and literature.

Continuing Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer said they were discussing these things because languages were needed as an instrument of culture, for business, for international relations and as a mother-tongue. In the whole of these discussions one thing that should be remembered was that nothing that was done by legislation or by ordinance could derogate from the fundamental and basic importance of the mother-tongue, which was the sole medium by which

the child first perceived and recognised the effects of the universe and came into being with them.

NOT A JOKE

He added that it was not often realised that the spread of knowledge and increase in learning of development and research were today embodied and enshrined not in text-books so much as in periodicals and journals. A knowledge of German or French and English would be necessary. Of course, the Government might take steps to translate into Hindi all the periodicals as they came, but the translation alone might cost them all the crores of money needed for developmental programmes (Laughter). It was not a joke.

His submission, therefore, was that at present Hindi was still a language in the making and it required to develop. " Let it develop and we wish it godspeed. When it develops, we can have another meeting and pass another set of resolutions " (Laughter). This pertinacious emphasis on Hindi was an injustice to the cultural background and cultural depth of our country, and acted as a serious handicap and hampered the development of literary, journalistic and political life. Further, to say that Hindi should be the medium for official transaction would be to give undue advantage to 40 per cent of the people of India by making the rest suffer. In competitive examinations and official correspondence, a certain standard had to be set up and, naturally the choice would go in favour of a certain people.

On the cultural side, Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer emphasised, they were to take the greatest possible advantage of the accumulated culture of all the literature and mental make-up of the world. In the past, that task was done by Sanskrit and if an attempt had been made 50 years ago to do exactly for Hindi what should have been done for Sanskrit, the problem would not have been so difficult as it was today. Because, there had been less opposition then to Sanskrit as a kind of official or national language. But, that might be a matter of difficulty just now. For many centuries, just as Latin or Greek was in Europe, Sanskrit had served as a language of culture and learning. Today, there was no doubt that a large number of books both of instruction and amusement, illustrative of world problems, had been written in any one of the languages—English,

French, German. It was necessary for us to be abreast of the times. As it was, it would be impossible, even to adherents of Hindi, to write in Hindi text-books in mathematics, biology, physics, etc., except by using of words polyglot. Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer added that they had reached a certain stage in politics, democracy, government and of scientific organisation. By certain influences we had had exceptional opportunities to develop. If we lost them now, we would be losing them for ever.

A Gujerat Example

Giving an example Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer said that in Gujerat they had made Gujerathi compulsory to M.A. standard. He had an opportunity of addressing the students once. It was common knowledge that a speaker of some experience could know whether his audience was listening to him or not. What he found there was that the students there, were strangely silent, looking at the ceiling or picking up something and all the while remaining absolutely immune to any injections by him (Laughter). They were University students. Similarly, in the Benares University they brought a German to teach the students political economy. The students hooted at him because he could not address them in Hindi and the result was that he resigned and went away. The dethroning of English from the place it held for cultural development and higher education, had resulted in our students withering away. The question was could we afford to do so.

Finally in international gatherings the success or failure of the exercise of influence of Mr. Nehru, Mr. Krishna Menon or Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari was conditional upon their putting their ideas or 'selling' their ideas and unless they did that in a language understood by the other side, they could not succeed. Therefore, Dr. Ramaswamy Iyer said the claims of the mother tongue and of English as passport to culture, handling world problems and emphasising our ideas was important. He hoped that their prayers would be pondered upon and listened to.

No Speculation

Mr. Rajagopalachari, who sponsored the main resolution, said the issue before them was confined to the official language of the Union. What Dr. Ramaswami Iyer said about the broader aspects

of the problem was also important and obvious too. But even the obvious was not seen by men moved by passion. That was the difficulty when great issues were taken up. It was difficult for fire-eaters on the other side to come to a decision. " But for a man like me, who is not a fire-eater, it has been an anxious and difficult matter. No one appreciates more than I the necessity for unity—cultural unity and national unity—for a single national language, if we have one. But, as speakers have pointed out, we have to deal with the present situation."

When dealing with measures for the progress of the nation, Rajaji said they could not behave in a speculative manner. The question was whether the English language, which had been prevailing as the official language for ten years since independence should be disturbed. What was the reason for throwing away the advantages derived from the use of English for 150 years? It was " uneconomic, impolitic and foolish " to throw away the advantages just for the sake of sentiment. That was why he wanted everyone to consider the matter with care.

MINISTERS' ABSENCE

They were all interested in the question but why then the Ministers in the Madras Government were not present at the Convention, Rajaji asked. " I want you to remember and reflect on it. Is it because they are not taking interest? No, they are taking interest and they are bound to take interest. Or, is it because they have not been invited? I know it is true they have been invited. Why then they are not here—difficulty caused by politics?"

Rajaji said a single party ruled India now and the same party rules the States. When there were conflicts between the requirements of the State Government and the ideal requirements of the Union Government, men found it difficult to decide. " That is the reason why Ministers should wait for your decision rather than plunge into it one way or the other. They prefer to go forward driven by you from behind rather than they speak out their own minds. Now don't you see why Ministers are not here? (Laughter). It is necessary to get the required strength from us here. It is all the more important that we should, with united voice, pass this resolution. It is only then that the Government, now hesitating to take over steps in the matter, can get sufficient strength to do what

they wish to do and what it is their duty to do. It is, therefore, important that we should, all of us, join together in this wholeheartedly, not minding the absence of the representative of the Government of Madras. They are absent for a particular reason, if you can appreciate it, not that they are inattentive."

UNITED OPPOSITION

Rajaji said that in deciding this question neither individual nor party interests should come into play. If an individual was ever interested in his own career, he would not be able to do much to the political party to which he belonged because he would always be obsessed with what was good for him. Similarly, if one looked always to party interests, he would not be able to do good to the larger interests. If everyone cast away his individual or party interests, then surely the resolution he sponsored would be found acceptable. All parties should be able to unite on this resolution.

Each one of the points in the resolution was important, Rajaji observed and all of them were overwhelming in their effect. He hoped that it would produce the same effect on the Union Government also.

Even though Parliament decided matters, yet it was on the initiative of the Executive of the Union Government depended largely what the Parliament finally did. There was a great deal of noise sometimes in Parliament but in the end when the Prime Minister raised his finger, things were done. They should take this factor into account.

" We are in a battle ", Mr. Rajagopalachari continued. " We have to fight against overwhelming opposition against us. Most of you live in the South and you do not know the feelings of the people of the North about this question. Feelings are very strong up in the North and if the South, West Bengal, and other non-Hindi areas have to win in this battle, they will have to act powerfully, united and with vigilance. Otherwise you won't succeed. There is much talk of domination of the South by the North. North will not be able to dominate unless the South divides itself. If the South goes on dividing itself, then surely we will be dominated by the North, East or West. We should be united not only on issues generally but on this issue in particular."

"This", Rajaji emphasized, "is the most real question. It is imminent and it is not postponed. Things cannot be done 15 years hence unless they begin now. Therefore, it is imminent. Things will begin now, even though the date line is some years later. The date line may lull you and make you non-vigilant. Whatever be the date line, it must begin now in practice. Admissions to schools and colleges, curriculum in schools and colleges, recruitment for public service commissions—for these details are to be worked out and all that will go on from now on. Therefore, the question is of imminent importance."

If they thought that there was nothing to be done immediately and there was no need to act now, then they would lose the battle and they would ultimately be forced to accept what they would not wish to accept.

English Mustn't Deteriorate

Rajaji said Dr. Ramaswami Iyer had very rightly made a reference to the importance of English. But what was happening now? English was deteriorating in the colleges. Instead of bemoaning this deterioration, many eminent men were gloating over the deterioration and arguing that was the reason why they should accept Hindi. "We cannot get on with English and your own people are not learning it, English is deteriorating," so they said. Therefore in beginning the battle against Hindi, Rajaji emphasized, they should all make up their minds that their younger men did not allow English to deteriorate. "If you allow English to deteriorate in high schools and colleges," Rajaji said, "we are bound to lose the battle. If for overwhelming reasons, you want English to be the official language of India, then you have to pay attention to that language and not allow it to deteriorate."

It was said Hindi would have to develop hereafter. But what the "Hindi" people argued was that Hindi would not develop unless it was adopted as the official language of the Union. They were taking advantage of the constitutional provision to argue that the first step for the development of Hindi was its adoption as the official language. They were under a delusion and whatever might be the delusion to which their delusion might lead them to, "we must fight that delusion. It is not easy unless we are united. If we go on splitting, we shall fall."

What they wanted was that Hindi should not be introduced and English should not be disturbed. "We will have to unite and united, we will overcome the opposition in this matter. Our only friend, let me tell you, our only ally, the only understanding man in this matter up in the North is the Prime Minister and no one else (cheers). But even so powerful a man has to bend before the delusions of the people around him."

"People up in the North want Hindi and are they men of bad conscience. Do they want to dominate others ?" Rajaji asked and answered, "No, they were patriots. They feel unpatriotic to have a non-Indian language as the language of the Union—not a bad argument. It was a very sound argument, if you do not examine the difficulties and other considerations. Patriotic impulse made them strongly attached to Hindi. While we recognise patriotism, we have a right to ask them to consider other matters. That is what we are trying to do. There are sometimes reasons for not doing the most patriotic thing. If their patriotic impulse did not injure vast masses of people in compact areas all over India and if there was no sense of subordination, then we will have no objection. That is what makes some people in the North recognise the difficulty of introducing Hindi by compulsion. Therefore, they suggested that Sanskrit should be made the official language. That is not a practicable proposition. Even priests who recite mantras in Sanskrit do not understand Sanskrit. It is no use of our putting our official work in that dangerous position. So it is impracticable, even though that would have been patriotic act."

Rajaji did not believe that the attitude of the North in the matter of Hindi was motivated by a desire to dominate. It was not domination that prevailed in them ; it was the patriotic ideal that prevailed. "Therefore we will have to explain our difficulties and place them in a scale-pan as against the patriotism they put in the other pan." After all we have been doing this unpatriotic thing during the past 10 years after attaining independence, even if we do not take into account what happened before independence. We have been able to manage with this unpatriotic medium for ten years. We have managed well not only in India but also abroad. We have managed well with this English language. Even the Constitution confesses the advantages of the English language in the sections dealing with courts, legislative procedure, etc. English will

continue in the High Courts and the Supreme Court even after the 15-year time limit. Why should non-Indian language be utilised for these purposes, where precision and accuracy is wanted. Because facts compel it. Is not precision wanted in administration? The Government of India should see the position in this light.

Mr. Rajagopalachari then contended that only 42 per cent of the people spoke Hindi and even here there were many dialectical differences. Even if they ignored these differences, the 42 per cent Hindi population were concentrated in the Central bloc, the Hindi bloc. The non-Hindi bloc was therefore considerable. They were spread all over India. If at least the Hindi speaking population had been distributed all over India, there might be something in favour of the proposal to have Hindi. That was not so.

Contrary Propositions

Rajaji said that there were very few things in this world which were wholly good or wholly bad. All things were mixed and " this unfortunate issue also is of that type. There are some things good and some things bad in the Hindi case and in the English case also. It would do no good to mix the two together, and say that we will have both English and Hindi side by side. There is no use of having two contrary propositions to balance one another. In this matter, you have to choose definitely one of the two alternatives and strictly adhere to that alternative. We should firmly adhere to some position. With all my loyalties, I will try to find out the best alternative and I recommend that the *status quo* is the best alternative." It was not a crime since they were already in the Commonwealth and the law of consistency at least should help the Government in the matter. If since the Muslim conquest, Hindi had progressed without compulsion and in peace, things would have been different. But, unfortunately, Hindi had had no opportunity to develop during the past 150 years. It would be suicidal to adopt Hindi as the official language. If the Union Government tried to govern a large country like India with a handicap like Hindi, adopted against their wishes, then their handicaps would become double-fold. If the 42 per cent Hindi speaking people wished to be the dominating group they had better not adopt Hindi, but carry on in English rather than add to their difficulties. The policy of Hindi would work for disintegration and not for unity.

They should have unity of language, if that produced unity of mind.

LINE OF LEAST RESISTANCE

Adverting to the recommendation of the Madras Government to have English alongside Hindi, Rajaji said that it was argued that if both languages were there, no harm would come. If the alternative was in the form as suggested by the Madras Government, then it might solve the immediate problem of friction. But it would not solve the problem. There would be considerable difficulty if correspondence was carried on in two languages. But the State Government had followed the line of least resistance of having Hindi and English. No battle would be won by following the line of least resistance. " If we want to win a battle, we should not follow such a policy. I wish to utter on this occasion the warning that it will produce great many difficulties and it is not good to compromise. That is one point that our Government should remember. It may be easy now but it will be difficult later on, as things progress. We have to stand together and fight the battle. Let us leave it to the Union Government to commit that mistake (adoption of Hindi and English) but let us not initiate that mistake. Let the Union Government propose that. That is the line of least resistance and they will follow it in Parliament. "

Mr. Rajagopalachari stressed the need for courage. One of the letters he received asked him to sponsor a strongly-worded resolution but the letter was anonymous. Why should the author of the letter lack courage to sign his name ? They were all obsessed with a sense of fear in all matters. Rajaji could understand if they were afraid of a ghost or of death. But why they should be afraid of expressing an opinion. Obligations to a party or to a friend were irrelevant in this matter.

P. T. RAJAN'S SPEECH

Mr. P. T. Rajan, M.L.C., seconding the resolution agreed that unity was necessary. But would Hindi be able to forge unity. They wanted to discard English because that was a language of slavery. But, even after adopting Hindi, they would not be able to dispense with English since they would need it for carrying on the work of the judiciary. They had modelled all their legislative and

administrative institutions on the English pattern. So why should they fight shy of the language alone? If they were sure Hindi would achieve unity, then he would welcome it. But historically, language had never acted as a unifying force. Community of interests and fellow feeling were really the factors which promoted unity. In these circumstances, people in the North should not use their majority in Parliament to impose Hindi on the South. It would be abuse of power and bring chaos and confusion and Indian history would repeat itself.

Mr. Rajan asked the Government of India to follow the advice of Rajaji pointing out that they suffered heavily because they did not heed his advice before Independence. Rajaji's advice was born out of practical wisdom and if it was brushed aside, ruin would befall this country.

Mr. P. Kodanda Rao moved a resolution for communicating the proceedings of the Convention to the President of India, the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee. He said that they were passing through a real crisis now. According to him, no language was foreign. "Foreign" was a political concept and would never apply to a language. Hindi was no less foreign than English but infinitesimally less useful. They stood to gain if they offered facilities to all sections of people, including labour, to learn English. That was the way to advance in the industrial and scientific field. The Convention's slogan should be "English ever, Hindi never".

Mr. S. R. Venkataraman seconded the resolution.

Mr. S. Chellaswami sponsored the resolution constituting the Committee of Action. Speaking with vehemence, he said that the whole chapter in the Constitution on Hindi should be deleted. He protested against the use of Hindi in money order forms, post cards etc. and said that this was a clear violation of the Constitution.

Mr. R. V. Krishna Ayyar seconded the resolution.

All the resolutions were passed unanimously.

Mr. S. Narayanaswami proposed a vote of thanks.

THE RESOLUTION

The following is the main resolution :

Recognising that the paramount need of the hour is to promote the emotional integration and preserve the complete unity of the nation and taking into consideration the feelings and difficulties, present and future, of the non-Hindi-speaking peoples, who form the bulk of the population in all except the Central region of India ; the decidedly disruptive consequences of any change in the *status quo* by the substitution of Hindi for English, on top of the centrifugal forces already generated by the re-organisation of the States on a linguistic basis ; the principle that in no circumstances should the views and feelings of a minority be disregarded, and an over-all majority be allowed to overrule them, on an issue of such importance, thereby negativing the basic principles of true democracy ; the fact that Hindi with its variations is not spoken by more than forty-two per cent of the population of India (*vide* Language Commission Report), and is confined as mother-tongue to the people of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar and commands no usage in the other areas of this vast country ; the further fact that the English language has been in official use for administrative, judicial, and legislative purposes, throughout the country, for over a century, including the last ten years after Independence, and that any disturbance of this existing arrangement will inevitably lead to such a fundamental change in the entire educational field as to result in a marked deterioration in efficiency in all the departments aforesaid ; the intimate connection that exists between University education and the language of the Public Services, as well as between University education and the secondary school courses leading up to it ; the necessity for continuing to use, in the higher grades of academic study, the source books in English, and in particular the growing volume of scientific and technological literature, and the fact that translations of such books and literature, even if made available, cannot serve the purpose ; the circumstance that every regional language is already accepted as the language of administration in the respective States, and the consequential absence of any conflict with the doctrine of unity of language between people and Government in the event of English being continued as the official language of the Union Government ; the overwhelming convenience of English as a medium of inter-State and international intercourse

and the need for reducing to the minimum the language burden in the courses of education which qualify for entry into the public services and remembering that in every State all departments of Government will function in the regional language, into which all Acts and proceedings of the Central Government will have to be translated, it was resolved that English should continue as the official language of the Indian Union ; and that the Constitution of India should be amended accordingly.

—*The Indian Express,* Madras, Dec. 23, 1957.

Future of English

Opposition to the adoption of Hindi as India's official language accumulates in the South and found vigorous expression on Sunday at the Union Language Convention of South India which met at Madras. Reverberations come from other quarters, though not all of them are pitched in the same high key. The University Grants Commission, following in the wake of the English committee headed by Pandit Kunzru, advised that the change from English to an Indian language should not be hastened and that even when a change in the medium of instruction is made, English should continue to be studied by all university students. To hasten slowly would appear to be the opinion of a considerable and influential section of people. Mr. Rajagopalachari has added his authoritative voice to the demand and that this view is not confined to South India alone is demonstrated by the support which his plea has received in varying degrees from persons as widely disparate as Mr. K. M. Munshi and Pandit Kunzru. Mr. Rajagopalachari, however, would exorcise Hindi as the official language with bell, book and candle.

On a numerical basis, Hindi admittedly has an overwhelming advantage over English which is confined to a microscopic section of the educated people. Yet, as the Language Convention pointed out at Madras, there are other considerations—not all of them emotional—which must be taken into account. Except for Central India and a few areas to the North, the bulk of India's population consists of non-Hindi-speaking communities. Linguistic rivalries, given a new edge by the re-organisation of States, have strengthened

the centrifugal forces in the country, accelerating and intensifying disruptive trends and tendencies. According to the report of the Language Commission, Hindi is spoken by no more than 42 per cent of the people and is confined, as a mother-tongue, to the population principally of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The Language Convention at Madras stresses other considerations. These include the fact that the English language has been in official use for administrative, judicial and legislative purposes throughout the country for over a century, including the last ten years of Independence. Moreover, the intimate connection existing between university education and the language of the public services, as well as between university education and the secondary school course leading up to it, cannot be ignored.

These are considerations worthy of study by all sections of the people whether Hindi-speaking or outside that charmed circle. Linguistic chauvinism can have no place here, for it only tends to blur and contort the picture and makes objective consideration difficult. The practical reasons for allowing English to enjoy the place it has occupied for over a century are impressive, indeed valid. As it is, every regional language has been accepted as the language of administration in the States which constitute the Indian Union. In this circle of concord, Hindi threatens to prove an apple of discord. So long as large sections of the people are opposed to its adoption as a national language, its imposition in the teeth of opposition can only aggravate difficulties and multiply fissiparous tendencies. Might the alternative use of Hindi or English as India's official language not be seriously considered and canvassed? It has support in some high places, and the fact that it constitutes a revolutionary proposal should not automatically rule it out of court in a country and among a people inured to revolutionary ways of life and thought.

—*The Indian Express*, Madras, Dec. 24, 1957.

Association for the Advancement of the National Languages of India

WHAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LANGUAGE COMMISSION AIM AT :

(*i*) that Hindi be recognised as the one and only official language of India, and ultimately the only common language of pan-Indian political, administrative and educational affairs ;

(*ii*) that English, which now serves as an alternative official language of India, be eliminated as early as possible ;

(*iii*) that Hindi be made a compulsory subject of study throughout the Secondary School course in all non-Hindi areas ;

(*iv*) that universities in any State be obliged to grant affiliation to Hindi-medium schools and colleges, and, in the case of teaching universities, make arrangements for imparting instruction in Hindi, whenever there arises a demand for it ;

(*v*) that, after 1965, all-India service examinations be conducted in Hindi and English, with the ultimate objective of making Hindi the only medium ;

(*vi*) that Hindi be accepted as a medium in the Service examinations of all non-Hindi States side by side with the "regional" language of each State ;

(*vii*) that Hindi and Hindi only be used in the Parliament, and for the purpose of legislative enactment both in the Centre and the States ;

(*viii*) that Hindi be ultimately made the only language permissible in the Supreme Court and the language of judicial verdict in the High Courts, and that Hindi be used side by side with the respective "regional" language even in the lower courts throughout the Indian Union ;

(*ix*) that employees in all Central and State Government services be compelled to learn Hindi and failure to do so be penalised ;

(*x*) that the States do take up through a separate Ministry or Department the work of propagating Hindi to non-Hindi peoples, developing Hindi literature, as well as translating into Hindi an enormous mass of legal, administrative and other literature, to fit Hindi for these various purposes ; and

(*xi*) that though non-Hindi speaking peoples (who form the majority of the total Indian population) be obliged to learn Hindi, Hindi-speaking peoples be required to learn, not necessarily another Indian language but, in its stead, a non-Indian language or an additional subject on Humanities.

WHAT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS MEAN IN PRACTICAL TERMS :

(*i*) The population of India will be sharply divided into two groups : a privileged Hindi-speaking minority who will enjoy better opportunities in every field simply through the fact of their being born to the language, and a vast non-Hindi-speaking majority who will find their talents and ambitions thwarted simply through an inadequate knowledge of Hindi.

(*ii*) Highly developed Indian languages of the North and South will become increasingly unnecessary as a means to material advancement, and for that reason receive increasingly less attention in educational institutions and from intellectuals even in those areas where they are naturally spoken.

(*iii*) In areas where Hindi is naturally spoken, education, including as it would a non-Indian language or an additional paper on Humanities, will have a content superior to that in non-Hindi areas where Hindi, an intellectually less serviceable language, will be made compulsory.

(*iv*) The elimination of English in India and the establishment of Hindi in its place will isolate us from world-culture in science, the humanities and technology, and cause regression into orthodoxy, chauvinism and medievalism.

(*v*) The quality of higher education all over India will be sacrificed to the naive notion of one group that India must have an Indian language as a common language.

(*vi*) Peoples in non-Hindi areas will be made to pay for the progressive deterioration of their own native languages and cultures, in the form of maintaining, within their respective States, Departments or Ministries for the upliftment of Hindi to a position of pan-Indian supremacy.

(*vii*) In the same way as India was divided in 1947 through the insistence of one group on founding a State on *one* religion, so will the Indian Union be sub-divided within itself through the imposition of *one* " regional " language on the entire country. Though Hindi is recommended in the name of Indian unity, no other step is more surely calculated to disrupt the same unity.

POINTS FROM DR S. K. CHATTERJI'S DISSENTING NOTE :

(*i*) The recommendations of the Language Commission, if implemented, will bring about the immediate creation of two classes of citizens : " Class I citizens with Hindi as their language, obtaining an immense amount of special privileges by virtue of their language only, and Class II citizens who will be suffering from permanent disabilities by reason also of their language. "

(*ii*) As Hindi has not gained any cultural pre-eminence over the other languages of India, any attempt to push the claim of Hindi too far can indicate only " an incipient ' Hindi imperialism ', which will be all the more anti-national. "

(*iii*) The impatient move " to replace English by Hindi and to give to Hindi a position of privilege in the non-Hindi areas " has resulted in a serious menace to Indian unity, namely, linguistic chauvinism.

(*iv*) Hindi has been proposed as the *official language of India,* but its supporters everywhere go much further

than that and describe it as *the national language of India* and *the language par excellence of India.* Some even have started a slogan : " Hind, Hindu, Hindi, these three are one ".

(*v*) Our Prime Minister has repeatedly expressed the view that *India has not one but fourteen national languages.*

(*vi*) Khariboli Hindi of prose, which has been made to replace Hindustani or Urdu and which, under the generic name of Hindi, features in the Constitution as the *official language* and aspires even to be *the national language of India,* scarcely existed before 1850, while the other modern Indian languages of the North are at least 1000 years old, and those of the South even older.

(*vii*) The number of " Hindi " speakers has been inflated by improperly combining the figures for Rajasthani, Kosali or Awadhi, Bhojpuri and Maithili, some of which are totally distinct languages.

(*viii*) Many so-called Hindi-speaking peoples are " virtually suppressing their home languages, the real mother-tongues " in favour of Khariboli Hindi and they are generally unable to appreciate " the passionate love which speakers of Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Gujarati and Marathi, and of the great Dravidian languages, feel for their mother-tongues. "

(*ix*) The Government of Madras, in formulating its language policy in education, making English compulsory and leaving Hindi optional, has put it : " *English provides and Hindi cannot provide direct access to modern creative thought.* " This is a self-evident truth which needs no support and cannot be refuted.

(*x*) English has now become almost *the* common language of a world-civilisation, and Indians who want English do so *because* they love their own languages and want their best minds to have full and easy access to world-thought, through the medium of English, so that their own languages and cultures may be enriched further. The desire to retain English arises not out of any per-

versity or a deficient sense of nationhood, but of a very deep humanistic idealism, which sees in English the means to belong to the entire world of Man.

(*xi*) The desire to eliminate English from India arises out of a false sense of national pride amounting to inferiority complex, or out of a deliberate blindness to the fact that India is a multi-lingual country where no one language can claim the willing homage of all and sundry.

SOME RELEVANT FACTS :

(*i*) India had never had *one* national language. In ancient times Sanskrit was the language of a strictly limited elite and only of men among the elite itself. In Mughal times Persian was exclusively the language of the court.

(*ii*) India does not have a natural national language in the sense that English is the national language of the United States. No one Indian language is naturally spoken or understood throughout the whole of the Indian territory.

(*iii*) The claim that Hindi is already the *lingua franca* of India is untenable. Bazaar Hindi, consisting of a few corrupt words and without any grammar or proper syntax, may be current in many parts, but real (Kharibolí) Hindi has a strictly limited sphere of currency.

(*iv*) The claim made in the Language Commission's report (Chap. IV, Para 17, p. 49) that the Hindi-speaking population constitutes " 42 per cent of the total of all population and 46 per cent of the total population of all persons speaking the languages of the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution ", is patently misleading, because in the same Report (Chapter III, para 6, p. 28) the combined figures for Hindi, Hindustani, Urdu and Punjabi are given as 42.01 per cent of the total Indian population.

(*v*) Hindi was selected as the official language of India, not by a Parliament consisting of properly selected representatives of the people, but by the Constituent Assembly, and by a very narrow majority.

(*vi*) Already, in the name of pan-Indian need, one particular "regional" language of India, namely Hindi, is receiving preferential treatment from the Centre, in the form of special patronage to its writers and speakers and employment of high-salaried teachers to teach Hindi to non-Hindi peoples. All this cost is paid out of revenue received from the entire population of India, much to the detriment of even their Primary Education.

(*vii*) One common or national language is not an essential component of nationhood. Switzerland, the world's oldest republic, has three national languages, and Belgium has two.

(*viii*) In the last 200 years English has never competed with any Indian language, but, on the contrary, has contributed greatly and vitally to the development of each one of them.

(*ix*) Not one Indian language, or many of them together, can in the present times serve all the purposes or give the same advantages that English can.

(*x*) If Hindi or English is to be learnt by Indians merely as a "tool" language, English, as a tool, will be incomparably more serviceable and powerful, and also give access to modern world-culture.

(*xi*) In many countries of the West and East, such as France, Germany, Russia, Japan, Egypt and South America, English has now become the second most important language in the educational system or has been so since the early years of the present century.

WHAT WE BELIEVE :

(*i*) Self-determination, self-realisation and self-expression can be achieved through the mother-tongue and the mother-tongue alone.

(*ii*) Since India does not have a natural national language, the artificial elevation of any one Indian language to that position will prove detrimental to all the other lan-

guages (each spoken by millions) and the native culture of each of those language-groups.

(*iii*) The term "regional", as applied to the twelve other living Indian languages listed in our Constitution, with the exception of Hindi, is itself derogatory and unrealistic. In the sense that it is spoken in one particular geographical region, Hindi is as much "regional" as Tamil, Marathi or Bengali, and German, Japanese or Russian is as much "regional" as Bengali, Hindi or Tamil. The persistent use of this incorrect and superfluous epithet is steadily undermining the prestige of all major Indian languages, including Sanskrit, with the exception and all to the favour of Hindi.

(*iv*) There is an important distinction between the *national* and *official* language, the former being natural, spontaneous and pervasive, and the latter a formalised product for occasional and specialised use. India has a real need for an official language, as a means of inter-State governmental communication, but to equate it with "the national language" is a fundamental and dangerous confusion.

(*v*) In keeping with the practice in most civilised countries, a second compulsory language should be taught in Indian secondary schools, and no language can be more advantageous and less expensive for this purpose than English.

(*vi*) It is not possible to visualise a time within the foreseeable or calculable future when India would be able to dispense with the use of a major Western language, as an integral part of higher education, without serious injury to her deepest national interests.

(*vii*) If India has to choose one Western language for general use, the claim of English is too strong to admit of any dispute. Not only is English a world-language with a universal store of translated and original works, but English is already current in India and has recently become more so.

(*viii*) If by Indian languages are meant languages spoken by substantial sections of Indians, then English, which is the natural language of the Anglo-Indian community and a section of Indian Christians, deserves to be recognised as one of the Indian languages.

(*ix*) Language, as embodied in the mother-tongue, is not, as the majority of the members of the Language Commission evidently think, a mere tool or " instrumentality " or means of communication. Language *creates* thought; its roots go deep down into the unconscious life of the people born to it ; it moulds their habits, emotions, feeling, cogitation—everything that constitutes the spiritual aspect of man. To put any one of our Indian languages in a position of supremacy or create conditions leading to the stultification of most or any one of them, is a flat negation of the equality of opportunity granted to all citizens by the Constitution.

(*x*) The preamble to the Constitution of India speaks of " the equality of status and opportunity " for all citizens of India, and more particularly it is laid down in Art. 16, Sec. I of the Chapter on Fundamental Rights that " there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. " The adoption of Hindi as the one and only official language for pan-Indian purposes will, by offering special advantages to those who naturally speak Hindi, constitute an infringement of the Fundamental Rights embodied in the Constitution. Any other provision or provisions in the Constitution of India, if found inconsistent with the high aims embodied in the Preamble and the Chapter on Fundamental Rights, ought to be so modified as to subserve those aims.

WHAT WE DEMAND :

(*i*) that each one of the fourteen Indian languages listed in our Constitution be officially recognised as a national language of India, and the term " regional ", as applied

to the twelve living languages except Hindi, be abolished and replaced by the term " national " ;

(*ii*) that within each State education be conducted at all stages in the respective national language or languages, as far as practicable, and energetic steps be immediately taken toward that end ;

(*iii*) that the respective national language or languages be used, as far as practicable, in all administrative, legislative and judicial contexts ;

(*iv*) that the State Governments and all educational authorities be left entirely free to determine the place of English and Hindi in the educational curriculum at all stages, unhampered by directives or discriminatory measures from the Centre ;

(*v*) that no discrimination be practised by the Central Government in extending facilities to any one particular Indian language in matters of dissemination through translations, publications, broadcasting, journalism and educational measures ;

(*vi*) that all-India service examinations be conducted in English and English alone ;

(*vii*) that, as soon as and inasmuch as practicable, State service examinations be held in the national language of the particular State and in that language alone ;

(*viii*) that multi-lingual States be left free to choose either English or the major languages prevalent in those States as the official language or languages and the medium of instruction, with due safeguard for minority interests ; and

(*ix*) that English be retained for pan-Indian legislative and judicial purposes, and that English and, wherever necessary, the language of the State concerned be used for communication between the Centre and the States, without any discriminatory status for any one language; and that Central official announcements and notifications meant for the people as also postal and railway

forms and notifications, etc. be issued in the language of the State concerned and English ;

(*x*) that, as between States, English or any other national language or languages agreed upon by the States concerned, be recognised as the medium of communication.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO :

(*i*) organise meetings in educational institutions, learned societies, public libraries, cultural clubs, etc., in Calcutta and other parts of West Bengal, with a view to rouse public consciousness with regard to this supremely important Language question ;

(*ii*) publish and circulate pamphlets and booklets, in both Bengali and English, in which the arguments set forth here will be discussed in full detail ;

(*iii*) give all possible help to cultural and professional bodies and students' organisations, such as may want to work independently on similar lines ;

(*iv*) effect co-ordinated action with non-Bengali groups in Calcutta, such as may share the point of view presented here ;

(*v*) spread the movement in other parts of North and South India ; and

(*vi*) organise or assist in whatever other forms of action that may be judged to be effective, until such time as the Language question is solved in a manner consistent with the guarantee of equal opportunity for all citizens, laid down in the Constitution of India.

OUR APPEAL :

We are not a political organisation and it is not easy for us to translate our project into action. We need funds ; we need helpers ; we need and claim the co-operation of whoever loves his language and his culture and is alive to the vital national interests of India. This is your cause. Please help us all you can.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US :

(*i*) By contributing one rupee and becoming members of our Association.

(*ii*) By giving donations.

(*iii*) By discussing this Language question within your own group, circle or professional or educational sphere, and holding group-meeting for this purpose.

(*iv*) By publishing letters and articles in newspapers and magazines.

(*v*) By suggesting means by which the cause may be advanced.

Proceedings of First All Bengal Language Conference

INTRODUCTION

The following resolutions adopted unanimously at a representative Conference of Bengal's literateurs, educationists, jurists, scientists, artists, publicmen, journalists and others represent a consensus of public opinion in West Bengal. The formulation of demands on the Language question was arrived at after a continuous process of discussion ever since September last. It is, therefore, requested that readers will give serious thought to it in coming to their own conclusions.

Two points may, however, be underlined here. English has been characterised in the Resolution No .2 as a major living national language along with others. That it is a major and living language there may be no two opinions about it. It is 'national' in the sense that it is the mother tongue of a substantial number of Indians though they are not living in one compact area. Therefore there should be no qualms of conscience in including English in the list of languages in the Constitution. There are of course other practical and cultural advantages that go with English.

We would also like to draw particular attention to clause (*x*) in Resolution No. 2 which suggests a definite way by which India can adopt another language or languages of Indian origin for pan-

Indian official purposes in the future. Therefore the usual criticism that we want English to dominate over us eternally is not justified.

The legislators and public men belonging to all parties have a great responsibility in coming to a sober decision on this issue. We appeal to them to consider these resolutions dispassionately, as setting an alternative approach to the entire language problem ; for the issue is a very sensitive one involving passions of millions on all sides and once these are aroused, more than the language issue may unfortunately become involved.

We also request intellectuals, educationists and writers belonging to all language groups to discuss these resolutions and articulate their considered opinions so that an intelligent public opinion is formed.

All those agreeing with these resolutions are welcome to become members of the Association by sending Re. One only.

We shall be glad to receive comments from the readers of the resolutions. All communications and contributions may be sent to :

K. K. Sinha, Hony. Joint Secretary and Treasurer, Association for the Advancement of the National Languages of India, 211, *Park Street, Calcutta*-17.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. I :

Recognising the fact that India is a country of many languages and cultures, this Conference is of the opinion that the unity of the country can only be maintained by a pervading attitude of tolerance and understanding, and of appreciation of this rich variety expressing itself in its fulness. This Conference therefore appeals to the people of India to cultivate that attitude and to test all measures and policies, particularly affecting such sensitive subjects as language, on the basis of this outlook.

This Conference stands for the natural growth of all languages on the foundation of complete equality of status and opportunity and extends its good wishes and co-operation to all the people of India speaking different languages, in furtherance of this cause.

This Conference declares that it has no ill-feeling or sense of antagonism towards either the Hindi language or the Hindi-speaking people. It wholeheartedly accepts all the major living Indian languages as national languages of India, each on an equal footing with the others and would like to see them develop simultaneously without any discrimination against or favour towards any of the languages.

In view of the above considerations, this Conference is firmly of the opinion that no one Indian language should be given a status that will discriminate against other languages.

RESOLUTION NO. II :

This Conference challenges the democratic character of Part XVII of the Constitution entitled " The Official Language of the Union " under which Hindi was accepted as the Official Language of India, in as much as it was passed by the narrowest majority (and even that after an earlier equality of vote on the issue) by the Constituent Asssembly.

This Conference rejects the Recommendations contained in the Majority Report of the Official Language Commission as a basis for the solution of the Language problem of India, as completely unrealistic, harmful to the growth of Indian languages other than Hindi, iniquitous and destructive of the political unity of India.

This Conference, therefore, demands :—

(*i*) that each one of the major Indian languages as well as English be officially recognised as a national language of India ;

(*ii*) that within each State education be conducted at all stages in the principal language of the State with adequate safeguards for linguistic minorities from as early a date as practicable, and that the State Governments and all educational authorities be left entirely free to determine the place of English and any other language in the educational curriculum, unhampered by directives or discriminatory measures from the Centre ;

(*iii*) that within each State the principal language of that State be used in all administrative, legislative and judicial purposes, from as early a date as practicable,

subject to adequate safeguards for linguistic minorities;

(*iv*) that all-India service examinations be conducted in English and English alone for the present;

(*v*) that, as between States English or any other language or languages agreed upon by the States concerned, be recognised as the medium of communications;

(*vi*) that no discrimination (as provided for in Article 351 of the Constitution) be practised by the Central Government in extending facilities to any one particular Indian language in matters of dissemination through translations, publications, broadcasting, journalism and educational measures;

(*vii*) that, from as early a date and so far as practicable, State service examinations be conducted in the principal language of the State, with adequate safeguard for linguistic minorities;

(*viii*) that multi-lingual States be left free to choose either the principal languages prevalent in those States or English as the official language or languages and the medium of instruction, with adequate safeguard for linguistic minorities;

(*ix*) that English be retained for pan-Indian legislative, administrative and judicial purposes for the present and that English and, wherever necessary the language of the State concerned be used for communication between the Centre and the States, without any discriminatory status for any one language; and that Central official announcements and notifications meant for the people as also postal and railway forms and notifications etc. be issued in the language of the State concerned and English;

(*x*) that one or more of the principal languages of India may be accorded the position of the official language or languages of the Union Government if the State legislatures unanimously agree to it by a two-thirds majority of each of them, provided that prior to any such change, equality of status of all Indian languages is maintained for a period of not less than

25 years from now and no discrimination is practised in the meantime by the Union Government in favour of any one of the Indian languages ; and

(*xi*) that Part XVII of the Constitution of India be amended in the light of the above resolutions and that any other change or changes in the Constitution that may be deemed necessary to give effect to these resolutions be similarly introduced.

RESOLUTION NO. III :

Having declared its opposition to the Recommendations of the Majority Report of the Official Language Commission ;

And having offered a constructive alternative approach to the problem of the Official Languages in India ;

This Conference appeals to all members of the Parliament and of the Legislative Assembly from West Bengal to take active steps to implement the demands of this Conference.

This Conference urges upon the people of West Bengal to mobilise public opinion in each legislative constituency in favour of this constructive approach to the problem and ask their elected representatives to the Assembly and the Parliament to represent their opinion on this issue without hesitation or equivocation. This Conference feels confident that all citizens of West Bengal, irrespective of partisan loyalty on other issues, will deem it their duty to take up this great work with a sense of urgency and devotion.

This Conference further urges upon the people of West Bengal to create effective sanctions so that the Union Government may not find it possible to resist the just demands of the people.

RESOLUTION NO. IV :

This Conference demands that the West Bengal Government immediately declare Bengali as the Official Language of this State and that effective measures be taken to fully implement this declaration by a date not later than 1961, the Birth Centenary of Rabindranath Tagore.

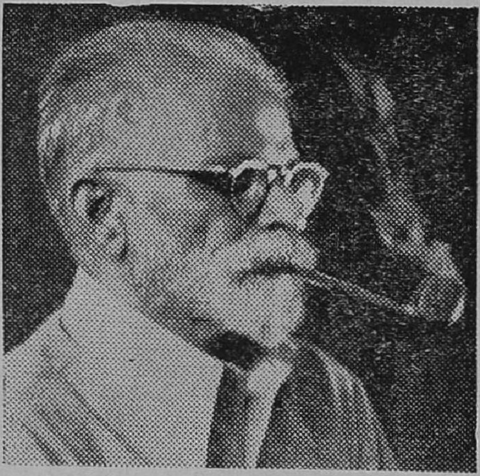
RESOLUTION NO. V :

This Conference demands that the compulsory teaching of Hindi in Secondary Schools of West Bengal be immediately withdrawn.

Obituary

Mr. A. V. Raman

We have to record with deep regret the death on January 29, 1958 of Mr. A. V. Raman, one of the founder Vice-Presidents of the Academy of Tamil Culture. After a long and eventful career as an Engineer culminating in his appointment as Sanitary Engineer to the Government of Madras, he dedicated himself on retirement solely to public activities.



MR. A. V. RAMAN

The cause of Tamil was very dear to his heart and during the last few years of his life, he devoted almost all his time and energy to the promotion of the Tamil language. With practical foresight he realised that, if and when Tamil took its rightful place in Tamilnad as the language of administration, education and modern culture, certain aids would be found essential in the initial stages and with this view, he embarked singlehanded—with little outside assistance, financial or otherwise—on (1) the preparation of a Comprehensive English-Tamil Dictionary in which the entire gamut of the Tamil lexical wealth was to be fully utilised (2) the compilation of Tamil idioms and phrases and (3) the collection of Tamil proverbs from literature and folklore. It was a herculean task and although he did not live to see them through the press, his labours are of great value to the State Government, to the Tamil Universities and to all others interested in ensuring that Tamil acquits itself efficiently in the new roles which she is being called upon to play, *viz.*, the administrative language of the State Government and all local bodies and the medium of instruction

at all levels of education within the State. We trust considerations of prestige will not stand in the way of Mr. Raman's labours being utilised to the full.

In 1954, he wrote a series of articles in the Tamil daily *Dhinamani* criticising in trenchant terms the slipshod way in which words and phrases were coined or borrowed, when elegant and expressive Tamil words were available either in literature or in colloquial speech and making various constructive suggestions for the enrichment of Tamil. In the concluding article, he made the following suggestion :

> நாம் இப்போது செய்யக் கருதுகின்ற தமிழ்த் தொண்டுகள் இனிதில் நிறைவேற வேண்டுமானால், தமிழ் மொழியின் தந்நிகரில்லாத் தனிச்சிறப்பைப் பிற நாட்டினர் தெரிந்து வணக்கஞ் செய்ய வேண்டுமானால், இன்றே தமிழ் மொழிக் கழகமொன்று ஏற்படல் வேண்டும்.*

Mr. Raman was supremely happy when the suggestion was almost immediately acted upon and the Academy of Tamil Culture established in September 1954.

Unfortunately a heart attack confined him to bed during the past three years and, although he was unable to take active part, his interest in the Academy was unabated and more than one meeting of the Governing Council and of the Editorial Board of *Tamil Culture* were held at his residence to enable him to assist in the deliberations. In fact, his residence in Lloyd Road became a place of pilgrimage for Tamil lovers and others interested in public affairs. His death has created a great void and members of the Academy will miss the infectious zeal and enthusiasm which he evinced in the cause of Tamil.

To his devoted wife and to his gifted son, Mr. V. P. Raman, the Academy conveys its heartfelt sympathy.

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* '*தமிழை வளர்ப்பது எப்படி*'; *ஏ. வி. இராமன், சென்னை 1957.*

News and Notes

STATE'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

By the Madras Official Language Act, 1956, Tamil has been declared as the official language of the State of Madras, says a Press Note issued today. With a view to facilitating the use of Tamil in official correspondence, the Government have already prepared and supplied to all Government offices a standard glossary of administrative terms. The Government have now decided that as an initial step Tamil should be introduced as the language of correspondence in all offices (other than Courts) for which English typewriters have not been sanctioned.

It is estimated that there are 1,922 such offices in this State. A notification under the Madras Official Language Act, 1956, authorising the use of Tamil as the language for official correspondence in these offices with effect from January 14, is being issued.

—*The Hindu,* January 12, 1958.

FIFTH VOLUME OF TAMIL ENCYCLOPAEDIA RELEASED

Mr. Nehru who released the fifth volume of the Tamil Encyclopaedia at a function got up in Rajaji Hall this evening, felt sure that difficult as the language problem was, they would be able to arrive at an arrangement by which no disability would be created for people of one part of the country in comparison with those in other parts.

The Prime Minister commended the adoption of common expressions for technical and scientific terms so that

people could get into touch with the main currents of science and technology.

The volume released at the function contains 750 pages with about dozen illustrations in tri-colour and single colour. The 17 articles of special interest included in the volume begin from the Tamil letter *chee* to *thi* and deal among other subjects with China, Solar System, telephone, trigonometry, botany, newspaper, mural paintings and Tamil language and literature.

Prime Minister Nehru was presented with a volume by Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar.

The Prime Minister, addressing the gathering, said: "For some time past, periodically, Mr. Avinashilingam Chettiar has presented me with a volume of the Tamil Encyclopaedia. Those previous volumes, I have treasured, although I could not unfortunately read them. Nevertheless, I try to form some idea by looking at the picture. That gives some idea about it and now you have done me a honour by asking me to inaugurate the fifth volume and I am happy to be present here on this occasion. It is really a tremendous, a great and an essential task in a language to have good encyclopaedia. I do not know very well about encyclopaedia of any other language in India. There are some of course. But I personally imagine that the one you are producing is fuller than others in other Indian languages."

—*The Hindu,* January 8, 1958.

CZECH TAMIL SCHOLAR

Dr. Kamil Zvelibil, Czechoslovakian Indologist and Tamil Scholar, who is on a visit to India under the Exchange Programme, arrived in Madras, this afternoon by air from Delhi. He was received at the airport by representatives of Tamil Writers' Association and the Academy of Tamil Culture.

Dr. Zvelibil will spend nearly a year in South India, during which period he will work with the Madras, Annamalai and Kerala Universities, doing research in ancient and modern Tamil. He has already translated some of the Tamil classics and some works of modern Tamil literature.

Answering questions from Pressmen, Dr. Zvelibil said his translations of Tamil Classics into Czechoslovakian language were well received in his country. "I must say," he added, "that the translations from Tamil were sold out within three or four days." The Czech scholar, who could converse in chaste Tamil, said he was happy to have the opportunity to visit South India, which was his cherished dream, and to know more about the Tamil people, their culture and language.

The Hindu, January 27, 1958.

MINOR POETRY

Inaugurating a conference on Minor Poetry in Tamil, held under the auspices of the South India Saiva-Siddhanta Publishing Society at Rajaji Hall this morning, Rajah Sir M. A. Muthiah Chettiar said that a language required for its growth and enrichment a "missionary zeal".

Mr. S. Ganapathia Pillai, Judge of the Madras High Court, releasing a publication containing the prepared speeches delivered at the conference, and said in the modern world Tamil could not lead an isolated existence.

Prof. L. P. KR. Ramanathan Chettiar, Professor of Tamil, Annamalai University, who presided over the conference, explained the history of minor poetry in Tamil, called "Sitrilikkiam" and described the peculiar characteristics of the poems.

Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar referred to the establishment of the Tamil Isai Sangham and said there was need for such an organisation because some people were opposed

even to the singing of Tamil songs. He was glad that devotional songs, which formed part of Tamil culture, were now being recited in the temples in the State. After paying a tribute to the work done by the Saiva Siddhanta Publishing Society, he said that Tamil scholars and pundits, even after retirement from service, were welcome to join the Annamalai University as they would be of great service in helping research on the various aspects of Tamil language and literature conducted now at the University.

Prof. Ramanathan Chettiar pleaded for greater encouragement to Tamil music in AIR programmes. He said the "Prabandhas", numbering 96, constituted minor poetry in Tamil literature. These were about 900 years old and truly mirrored the life of the ancient Tamils. Describing some of the types of minor poetry, he said 'Ula' were noted for literary excellence. The poets, who wrote these, showed a keen insight into human nature. "Kalambagam" was a mixed type and "Thoothu" was rich in imagery, he added.

Mr. Ganapathia Pillai felt that in spite of the talk of renaissance in Tamil and of a new awakening among the Tamil-speaking population about the greatness of Tamil, their enthusiasm was still flagging. There was, however, no point in their blaming others for the fall of Tamil into disuse. They could not be purists either, if they wanted to enrich the language. He would, however, ask them to make sure that they did not have in their own language the words they wanted, before copying them from other languages. He knew many important Tamil words had fallen into disuse and therefore were forgotten. After stressing the need for enlightened research in literature and language, he urged that the Tamil writers, scholars and pundits should be kept above want, if they were to play their parts in developing the language. The State Government had now adopted Tamil as the official language, he said and expressed the hope in due course

it would also become the Court language. He exhorted the people to help make the change-over smooth and successful so that Tamil could be restored to its ancient glory.

Ilavazhaganar unveiled a portrait of Mr. K. Subramania Pillai, first Head of the Tamil Department of the Annamalai University. An erudite scholar, Mr. Pillai was a legal expert also, he said. A man of firm principles, he had great faith in constructive work ultimately overcoming all fissiparous and separatist tendencies.

Dr. M. Varadarajanar, Professor of Tamil, Pachaiyappa's College, unveiling a portrait of Marai Malai Adigal, said that the Adigal was the first to champion the cause of Tamil and he spearheaded the movement for developing a pure Tamil.

Earlier, Mr. V. Subbiah Pillai, Secretary of the Society, welcomed the gathering.

The Hindu, January 19, 1958.

Transliteration of Tamil Phonemes* into English

VOWELS

அ	—	a	(as in among)
ஆ	—	a:	(,, calm)
இ	—	i	(,, sit)
ஈ	—	i:	(,, machine)
உ	—	u	(,, full)
ஊ	—	u:	(,, rule)
எ	—	e	(,, fed)
ஏ	—	e:	(,, able)
ஐ	—	ai	(,, aisle)
ஒ	—	o	(,, opinion)
ஓ	—	o:	(,, opium)
ஔ	—	au	(,, now)

CONSONANTS

				Hints re: articulation
Hard[1] (Plosive)	க	—	k	(as in king, angle, alhambra)
	ச	—	c	(,, church, angel, calcium)
	ட	—	t:	(,, card ?)....Retroflex - articulate with **blade** of tongue.
	த	—	th	(,, threat, this, thick)....dental.
	ப	—	p	(,, pipe, amber)
	ற	—	t	(,, atlas, sunday, arrears)..Retroflex- articulate with **tip** of tongue.
Soft (Nasal)	ங	—	ng	(,, sing)....velar n
	ஞ	—	nj	(,, angel)....palatal n
	ண	—	n:	(,, urn ?)....Retroflex n - articulate with **blade** of tongue.
	ந	—	nh	(,, anthem)....dental n
	ம	—	m	(,, mate)
	ன	—	n	(,, enter)....Retroflex n - articulate with **tip** of tongue.
Medium (non-nasal continuant)	ய	—	y	(,, yard)
	ர	—	r	(,, red)
	ல	—	l	(,, leave)....Alveolar l - articulate with **tip** of tongue.
	வ	—	v	(,, very)
	ழ	—	l-	(,, ?)....Retroflex l - articulate with **blade** of tongue.
	ள	—	l:	(,, hurl)....Alveolar l - articulate with **blade** of tongue.
Auxiliary[2] (ஆய்தம்)	ஃ	—	x	(,, ahead)

* The Tamil phonemes may for practical purposes be treated as having single allophones only, except in the case of the hard consonants which have four allophones each, as shown in note 1 on the reverse.

1. The Phonemes, classified as *hard,* have normally an *unaspirated unvoiced* value but acquire the following modified values if preceded by a consonant :—

   (a) a *slightly aspirated* unvoiced value, if preceded by a *plosive or hard consonant.*

   e.g., பக்கம் – is pronounced pakkham, not pakkam

   (b) an unaspirated but *voiced* value, if preceded by a *nasal or soft consonant* :—

   e.g., பங்கம் – is pronounced pangam, not pankam
   பஞ்சம் – „ panjam, not pancam,

   (c) a *fricative* value if preceded by a *non-nasal continuant or medium consonant or by the auxiliary consonant.*

   e.g., பல்கலை becomes palhalai not palkalai
   எஃகு „ ehhu not exku

NOTE.—In most present day dialects, the plosive assumes a fricative —sometimes a voiced—value after a vowel also, except in the case of t : which retains its normal unaspirated, unvoiced value even after a vowel.

2. The value of this *auxiliary* phoneme, which must *always* be followed by a hard consonant, was variable during the time of Tholkappiam; it acquired a phonetic value identical with that of the following hard consonant, vide 1 (c) above,

   e.g., எஃகு became ehhu

   Later its value became fixed as h, irrespective of the following consonant.

Note. (i) With a view to keep down transliteration to the minimum it is suggested that, in the case of Tamil words which are already in free use in English (e.g., Tamil=Thamil), or where it is unnecessary to indicate the exact pronunciation, accurate transliteration need not be resorted to. In the case of proper names etc., which occur more than once in the same article, the transliteration need be shown only once in brackets side by side with a free English adaptation, the latter alone being used subsequently, except of course in cases where such a procedure will lead to ambiguity,

   e.g., வேங்கடம் = Vengadam (Ve : ngkat : am).

(ii) Reference may be made to *Tamil Culture,* Vol. IV, No. 1 (January 1955 issue) pp. 58-73 for fuller details.

THE TAMIL SCRIPT

(This table is given for the guidance of those who wish to read Tamil texts which often appear in TAMIL CULTURE)

Vowels	Vowel symbols attached to preceding consonant.	Hard consonants						Soft consonants						Medium consonants					
		k	c	t:	th	p	t	ng	nj	n:	nh	m	n	y	r	l	v	l-	l:
அ a	nil	க	ச	ட	த	ப	ற	ங	ஞ	ண	ந	ம	ன	ய	ர	ல	வ	ழ	ள
ஆ a:	ா to the right of the consonant	கா					றா			ணா			னா						
இ i	ி to be *joined* at the top—right of consonant	கி																	
ஈ i:	ீ to be *joined* at the top—right of consonant	கீ																	
உ u	a semi-circle, a vertical stroke or a loop to be *joined* to the bottom	கு	சு	டு	து	பு	று	ஙு	ஞு	ணு	நு	மு	னு	யு	ரு	லு	வு	ழு	ளு
ஊ u:	Same as for u, but with an additional stroke or loop	கூ	சூ	டூ	தூ	பூ	றூ	ஙூ	ஞூ	ணூ	நூ	மூ	னூ	யூ	ரூ	லூ	வூ	ழூ	ளூ
எ e	ெ to the left of the consonant	கெ																	
ஏ e:	ே to the left of the consonant	கே																	
ஐ ai	ை to the left of the consonant	கை								ணை			னை			லை			ளை
ஒ o	ெ to the left & ா to the right of the consonant	கொ					றொ			ணொ			னொ						
ஓ o:	ே to the left & ா to the right	கோ					றோ			ணோ			னோ						
ஔ au	ெ to the left & ள to the right	கௌ																	
மெய் pure consonants	A dot · on the top of the consonant	க்																	

Note.—(1) The vowels are written as shown in the first vertical column.

(2) The consonants are written as shown in the horizontal columns, with a symbol or symbols indicating the vowel immediately following. A consonant followed by the vowel அ (a) has no symbol, while the pure consonant not followed by a vowel has a dot on top.

(3) All the eighteen vowel consonants under க (k) are shown as a guide; in other cases only the irregular forms are shown, the rest being exactly similar to those shown under க (k), excepting for trivial differences in a few cases which might safely be ignored.

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Published by Mr. C. Amritaganesan for Academy of Tamil Culture, 13, Clemens Road, Madras-7 and printed by K. S. S. Rajan at The Jupiter Press Private Ltd., 109-C, Mount Road, Madras-18.